Speculative Dialogues by Lascelles Abercrombie

SPECULATIVE DIALOGUES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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SPECULATIVE DIALOGUES

BY LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

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È un principe-sacerdote tra loro che s'appella 'Hoh', et in lingua nostra si dice 'Metafisico'. Questo è capo di tutti in spirituale et in temporale, et tutti li negozî in lui si terminano.—La Città del Sole.

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FAMINE AND PESTILENCE

FAMINE AND PESTILENCE

FAMINE.

Well met, my sister! It was a long way off that I saw through the heat-shimmer the black waving of thy skirts upon the lowmost air.

PESTILENCE.

Greeting, dear sister; this, then, is the place we were to meet at?

FAMINE.

Yes; thou and I, with our kindly besoms, are to sweep this cumbered floor of India a little.

PESTILENCE.

Well, I am ready; and I see the holy hunger gleaming in thy eyes, two pointed green brilliances behind the red ardour. We must await our Mother's signal, I suppose?

FAMINE.

As the sacred wont is. Till then let us talk awhile, for when the work begins, thou knowest our Mother enjoins silence. Come, sit, and ease thy shoulders of thy sack. What, my sister, thy sack is full of a notable writhing; they are hungry, thy little hounds? Which hast thou brought this time?

PESTILENCE.

My favourite leash, Small-pox, Cholera, and Black Death.—Peace then, my plagues; this eagerness of yours is very dear to me, but do not tire yourselves with needless exertions. Your time is not far off—and then, dear sister Famine, when we are freeing the Human Will from a too great accretion of bodies, when we are clearing the path, thronged to choking, of man's progress, and unbaffling the way to happiness and goodness, imagine the million-throated thanks, greeting our welcome ministrations.

FAMINE.

Ah, Pestilence, do not sneer about the horrible ingratitude of Man, for it is a matter very grievous to me. I could rebuke our Mother for setting us at such tasks among her chosen race as win us nought but cursing. And why do they curse and abhor us? Surely it needs not our grand view of affairs to see plainly that, since men are such imprudent breeders, we and our operations are as necessary to them as air. If they must curse, let them curse our Mother, who made them too generous multipliers. Were we to go from among them, they would love us and implore our return, I warrant.

PESTILENCE.

Thou speakest bitterly, sister, and unwisely. Thy ears have, I guess, been lately annoyed with in-

gratitude. Put aside thy anger, and tell me, dost thou not love Mankind ?

FAMINE.

Did I not love them, would I toil so for them, even to supererogation ?

PESTILENCE.

We both love them, and their return is hatred, fear, or—hardest to carry—such worship as they give to devils.

FAMINE.

Yet if we left them alone, the world would be like a bottle full of wasps.

PESTILENCE.

Yes, and happiness like the drop of treacle at the bottom, hidden by the swarms that crammed into the vessel of Being to taste it.

FAMINE.

And, to push the matter to its extreme, what of mere food and room for activity—nay, what of the air itself, spoilt in the service of lungs beyond reckoning, with no green herbage to regenerate it, all trees and grass padded into barren clay to make standing-room for men and their dwellings, the whole world a paved town ? Man would hate man worse than angel hates devil. O why, why can they not see the necessity for us ?

PESTILENCE.

I cannot altogether believe that such an enormity would happen, dear impulsive sister. That tickle question, the birth-rate, might upset this calamity of thine. The calamity in my mind is a subtler, and I think a more horrible one. For this is certain: the greater the number of men, the more each man has to struggle for existence; and the more he has to struggle, the more ignoble, petty, and twaddling becomes his life—the life of his mind, of his passions, and of his spirit. In a crowded world there can be no great way of living. As long as we keep down the numbers, man has a chance of becoming a soul worthy to look upon the stars. But if we do not keep them down——

FAMINE.

Well then, they should greet us with dance and song, as they welcome that pretty cheat, Spring.

PESTILENCE.

Though most men think of us as active malevolences, mere enlarged enemies of humanity, some do dimly perceive, I suppose, that without us the race would come to a horrible marsh of weltering superfluity. But all, even these, hate us; and I dare swear there is not a human being on this planet who, if the question were put, would not be in favour of our quitting. The reason is plain: the consequence of our abstention—that Man would become as filth on the

earth—would not appear during the lives of any men now in the light; nor indeed in the lives of their near descendants, though it would come perhaps sooner than the wise among them imagine. Put the case, then, that our Mother took the vote of humanity regarding us; we should be expelled unanimously, for out of doubt the voters would gain some benefit, and would not in the least be harried by any imminence of the incredible ensuing woe—scarce any of them by the least notion of it; for it is beyond the devising of most human imaginations. And even if it were not, the disaster being invisible and plainly not intended for their own heads, the voters would not take it into account. They themselves would benefit by security; that would be enough.

FAMINE.

Can such baseness really be? Would they only consider their own persons?

PESTILENCE.

I do not put it so low as that. I will even say, that in most cases they would be thinking of husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, and children, rather than of themselves.

FAMINE.

They are then inferior to beasts that dwell together in a community. Wild swans, for an example at hazard, living by thousands in a swannery, the room and food of which must be limited, often produce far

more young than their world can support. They therefore put away their own feelings, taking on themselves our duties amongst the human kind, and slay just so many of the cygnets as may reduce their numbers to the proper size ; and so the interest of the community comes before individual loss.

PESTILENCE.

The motive might, I think, be equally well considered to be the old birds' selfishness.

FAMINE.

Not so ; for then they would kill *all* the cygnets, and have plenty instead of just enough. It would be too much to expect the old birds voluntarily to make way for those young that overtax the swannery.

PESTILENCE.

Quite so ; but there is something among humanity that is in a way comparable to the swans' high-minded slaughter of cygnets. No doubt it has forced itself into *thy* notice. I mean the way the more fortunate of mankind assist us to remove their less fortunate brothers and sisters. And herein is the difference between their conduct and that of the swans. The men are not willing to let their own children be removed, but they are by no means averse from letting us sweep up other children, as long as their parents are in a lower class. I have heard some of the rich say, it was no bad thing that I should keep down the

numbers of the poor; but it is not good at all if I send for one of their own kin. And the bare possibility that I may do so would drive them to vote, as I said, for our leaving the world altogether, were such a thing conceivable. Thou, of course, canst not ever come near the families of the rich, but I can occasionally manage to insinuate one of my messengers through a chink in their precautions. They are so eager to fence themselves from thee and me with redoubled surety, that they deprive the poor in their lands of any protection from us whatever. Consequently, as thou knowest, we both gather in civilized nations such a superb harvest from the children of poor folk, that it quite reconciles us to not much fingering the children of rich folk. In fact, it is a bargain between us and the rich; leave, say the rich, us unbereaved, and you shall have double ingathering from the poor.

FAMINE.

I often wonder whether my love for mankind be not a trifle unreasonable. If thou lookest closely at the creatures they are not so very lovable.

PESTILENCE.

Thou, my sister, like most good workers, art but a moderate thinker. That zeal of thine to be doing, which pierces through the red glaze of thy eyeballs like sword-points of green fire, betrays that it is not thy use to sit pondering mysteries. I know indeed that thou must spend many a day weaving a vast

perplexity of spells over the land thou hast taken into thy practice before thou, the mighty authentic Famine, canst begin walking abroad and plucking up men's lives. It is no simple job, but a huge complication—jarring the wheel of seasons, blighting of crops, borrowing from me murrain for the herds, flooding of rivers, clogging of roads to hinder transport, and guarding the fords with the hunger of alligators—a grand web of disasters to be made patiently and carefully before thou canst be sure of thy effects. But I arise from my lair in the fens, or from long resting in sewers or on rubbish-heaps, stalk into the middle of the populace which has been devoted to me, and at once leisurely, with scant preparation, begin my shooting. I only have to raise my hands and direct my flights of malady, and call them off when our Mother nods "Enough." So I have greatly more time for contemplation than thou hast.

FAMINE.

Then explain me this. I have lately been much worried by the impudent contrivances of man to spoil, or at least hinder, my operations. These roads of steel lines, now, whereon carts are dragged by that wild thing Steam as if it were a harnessed horse—these railways I mean; thou wouldst not believe how they can make my devices nought. I may have a land in the best possible train for being hunger-starved—the flocks drowned by floods, the crops blighted and beaten into the mud by unseasonable hail, the stores

of grain nigh empty, and what is left sprouting and ergotised, all the roads mere bogs; I bare my arms and kilt my robes ready for the days of swift running and hasty snatching of lives out of their bodies; I watch the bellies sinking and the ribs jutting and the eyes maddening; I am just on the point of starting my course; when lo! in come innumerable wagons loaden with the plenty of prosperous acres a thousand leagues away, grains and breads, ay, and milch-cattle, medicines, and cordials. Man has beaten Famine! Of course, dear Pestilence, I do not imagine that I am really defeated; it is but temporary. I shall find a way to throw their engines of relief out of gear, to unhinge this momentary control. And there is scarce a city in the world where my contrivances are not even now pinching bellies. But two things are suggested to me. First, what is our Mother's purpose in permitting Man so to interfere with me, here in India, where the ground is already overcrowded? Second, this does not look like the selfishness thou wert describing—only a most perilous ignorance.

PESTILENCE.

As to selfishness, I would answer that were there such a thing as racial consciousness among men, as there is among bees, it were merely the humanity of the present hour striving to augment its total happiness at the expense of the humanity of the next two or three hours; however, the race of men is not conscious. My answer to the first springs out of that. Our Mother

is giving men a quality that is the very destruction of racial consciousness; she is employing many means to increase the Individuality of men—it is now her main care. This she does by making Man more and more aware of his Self; and this permission of hers to oppose thee has that purpose. For self-awareness is fostered by allowing him to perceive and to reason about those of her ministers who work on him, still more by even allowing him to oppose that work, or to delegate it to his own will. Also our Mother for the same purpose has implanted the faculty of Mercy in the nature of Man. The more use he makes of Mercy, the better is she pleased; for Mercy is a very bright illumination for Man's inward vision.

FAMINE.

I am not quite with thee yet.

PESTILENCE.

It is surely simple. Every race of beasts may be considered as an Absolute Monarchy. The whole tribe is in the grip of one grand Lust-to-Live, and it is impossible for any member of the tribe to question the rule and authority of this irresistible Crown. Whatever the king bids is done. This mode of being has been pushed to its furthest limits in such creatures as ants or bees or those swans of thine. But in Man, our Mother is trying a different course. The human race may be likened to a multitude of Autonomous Colonies. They have, indeed, a nominal Crown, a

general Lust-to-Live throned over the race, and they are perhaps loyal colonies; but every one is, within certain bounds, self-governing. Instead of the whole race having but one will, every man now has a conscious will of his own. And to the improvement of Man's individual conscious will, our Mother is devoting all her ministers, even us, Pestilence and Famine. Yet, on the other hand, I cannot see how Man can fail to deteriorate if his number increases much.

FAMINE.

What hast thou been saying? This is near blasphemy, I think. Our use under the Mother is to keep down with beneficent slayings the numbers of mankind.

PESTILENCE.

That was our use; and in the beginning of this talk I was pretending that so it is still. But it is not; we are no longer invincible to men. They get the better of us all over the world. Thou thyself hast confessed that thy webs of benevolent calamity are burst, and thy wise perishing hungers are filled, and nations taken out of thy devastating by the engines of men. Thou art not half the fear thou wert. Trust me, thou wilt in the end be utterly fooled. It may even come that the white men will not only defend foreign peasants from thy hands, but will warn thee off the poor of their own cities—it is not impossible, though I admit it looks unlikely. And then not in the whole width of the world will there be a human life twisting in vain

from thy fingers. And am I any better off? No, my case is as thine. What with medicines, inoculations, surgeries, and cleanliness, my dogs are being made all as if they were fangless; they will soon do no more hunting for me. Look how men destroy, or make uninhabitable, the poor things' kennels, the swamps and the rank woods, the rubbish heaps and the middens. If any beast is found giving hospitality to my plagues, man straightway exterminates it. He noses me infallibly. He poisons my rats; he executes my flies and my midges, suffocating their swimming grubs in the ponds under poured oil—ay, he drugs the very land if I but crouch in it. Where does all this human success point except to this, that in time man will have altogether conquered Pestilence and Famine? And I say that, from now on, our Mother is not using us to repress man's rash multiplication; she is setting us on to work only that Man may combat us and at last overcome us; that by so doing his will may acquire more potency and his individual self-awareness become more illuminated. Why she wishes man so to become, only she herself knows.

FAMINE.

But this is horrible. Even suppose what thou sayest does happen, what good will it be when the whole ground of the world is stamped into barren streets, and every habitable clime is crawling with human beings? Or dost thou mean that man will himself undertake our old duties?

PESTILENCE.

That is possible; but I hardly think it will be so. Our chancy sister War, who has been doing a pretty riddance lately, may continue her slaughters; but, in the condition of mankind I foresee, it is improbable that her meddling will always be tolerated. She's a bloody-minded, loud-talking wench, and a messy worker; not as we are, quiet, clean, dispassionate. Then there is that squinting demon, Trade, who murders under the pretence of doing something else, no one knows what. I wonder men have not seen through her devilish flams and sent her back to the Hell she escaped from.

FAMINE.

She has often given me help. But she is a rare ugly fiend; I have many a time sickened at her looks.

PESTILENCE.

I advise thee to break such a foul alliance and spare thyself qualms. Well, the Man whom I perceive will not endure her beastly domineering. She will go along with the cannon of War and the kindly contrivances of thee and me. In fact, Man's Will will conquer all its obstacles and triumph over everything except—itself.

FAMINE.

I cannot imagine where thou art leading me. Am I really to believe that our Mother intends to give

man absolute empery until he is damned in his own fertility ?

PESTILENCE.

No, I don't think so. Dimly I can see a way how the best achievements of man's will may be preserved, and yet the world may be relieved of too much throng, so that those achievements may be well and nobly used. I wonder if I have really guessed a little step into her purpose, or is it only an idle speculation ? Of course, Man might limit himself by restraining in a powerful brake his own breeding propensity ; but that such a thing should become general is, I think, less believable than what I am going to hint at. Also in some lands the birth-rate is naturally diminishing ; but in others it is not. Anyway, hear my speculation. I may seem to contradict some of what I have said previously ; I cannot help it ; perhaps it is the better for that.

FAMINE.

I do not suppose I shall notice it, if thou dost so.

PESTILENCE.

In the first place, I must point out that, although in the end all kinds of the human race will share the triumphs of man's will, it is the White Man that has been the great deviser, and the great wielder of conscious will. He cannot kill the chances of our recurring visits to his own people without doing the same, unintentionally perhaps, for the other peoples. Now suppose that the White Man has acquired a will

so mighty that it governs all its external circumstance: the point is, to what use will he put that government? In other words, though his will control the world, can it—can it ever—control itself? Has it power over its own nature?

FAMINE.

If, as thou sayest, it is conscious will, I suppose, Yes, it has.

PESTILENCE.

I think that is really no reason for such an answer. And henceforth, please, by Will let us mean Conscious Will. Now this Will is not a simple affair. It is the resultant of a prodigious number of forces, reinforcing and conflicting. Somehow or other it has become self-conscious; it is its own instrument. We will say it can do what it likes; it can fashion everything to its lust. But its lust it cannot fashion. It can do what it wants, but perhaps it does not want aright. For the lust of the will is, in fact, its self-awareness; and to be conscious is not to know what consciousness is. Now suppose there be some immedicable evil mixed into the consciousness of man, the lust of his will, giving it such a bias that it uses its victorious powers to its own destruction? Remember, I am speaking just now of the White Man only. Thou hast been in England?

FAMINE.

Have I not?

Pestilence.

Studying the way men live in England, the poor excuse they have for existence, together with the huge powers they have acquired over circumstance—studying these things has led me into much thought. Come with me now into an English town. What a prodigy has man's will made here! It has deliberately woven the multitudinous separate toilings of men into vast continuous nets wherein more easily and more completely to catch the forces of nature. In numberless factories men make with appalling expedition clothing, food, and other needments. There are thronged workshops where ores are smelted and founded into engines for tillage, harvesting, spinning, weaving, and generally for dredging out of nature whatever is of use to man. Outside the town are mines where they bleed the veins of the earth. And what is the good of all this power to these men? Why do they go on exercising it more and more? Is it in order to live nobler, larger, more passionate, more ecstatic, more beautiful lives? I believe not. They know not why they do these things, except that they obey the Lust of their Will. The more they do, the more their Will lusts for greater insane mastery over nature—insane, for it desires nought beyond mastery. They cannot stop their Will now; it cannot help using its poteney. It is fastened into a habit; like a man might be who, finding it distasteful to eat mud, has, for the mere sake of overcoming, forced mud down his gullet

until his mouth has discovered a hideous relish in the filth. Do men seem to be living joyfully or nobly in an English town ? By " joyfully " I do not mean " not being mopish and glum " ; I mean a very positive thing, a feeling that it is admirable delight to have senses and emotions. Are men much aware of beauty in an English town ? Look inside their factories, inside their homes. True, there is one form of beauty still left to them—beer ; but it is a perilous form for men who have no other, and even that seems likely to be taken from them. For nothing else but mere mastery does their Will lust, and nothing else does it acquire. All other forms of desire, such as desire for Beauty and Joy, it esteems as obstacles to its main progress, to be pruned away ruthlessly, and if possible destroyed. And mind thee, these cities are but infancies, for the power of man's Will is only just beginning. But already the white man's will is an ignoble giant ; it will soon become an ignoble god. Thou wilt say, perhaps, it may improve ; these are but the ungainliness of growth. Well, I see no sign to make me think that. It looks to me as if incredible potency were married to incurably diseased lust. Greater and greater will become the dominion of the white race's will, further and further removed from joy its life. It will hypnotise itself into a belief in its nobleness by jabber of " the strenuous life," " the gospel of work," " the supremacy of reason." Doubtless the men will better their bodily conditions by what they call Social Reform—another kind of hypnosis.

But spiritual joy will be of no account among them—it is not of much account now. They will just go on obeying the blind lust of their will for mastery; they will go on stifling in the middle of their mad triumph, insanely exulting in their achievements, furiously swinking under roofs, scribbling in offices, or shovelling round furnaces; and life will be of about as much value to them as it is to a squirrel paddling in a turning cage. And suddenly, like a lanced dropsy, or like an overweighted floor full of dry rot, the power of the white race will give; for there was no joy in it. Can anything stand that is not founded in joy, grown up with joy, and all its nature mastered by joy? We know full well it cannot. The huge stature of the white race straddling over the world will be seen to cringe, and its brave, insolent port to cower suddenly, as if age blasted it all in a moment; but it will be an anguish of self-hate falling upon it, as a burning coal falls on flesh.

FAMINE.

And what then? Will it at last learn joy?

PESTILENCE.

I think it will be too late. But some races will still have kept joy on their side; a remnant, perhaps, but powerful by reason of that alliance. Before the joy of the coloured races, the white race will finally be as pale vapour is before the glee of the sun. It will pass away to make room for nations that know how

to dance; leaving behind, it may be, whatever of good it has achieved for the use of men who can enjoy, —a heritage of powers that will at last come to be employed for Beauty and Delight and Worship. In fact, its own power will become to the white race a pestilence so terrible that my favourite leash, Smallpox, Cholera, and Black Death, will seem like three merry mischievous fleas compared with it. The European grasp will slacken from the world, and these nations will shrink together and dwindle. We have seen the white race eat, like a leprosy, upon the other races, and do them more harm than we ever did together, establishing factories where there were temples, work where dances were, clothing where was nakedness. In the coming time, when we are withdrawn to our Mother's side, we shall watch the tide shift, and mark the coloured races not only recovering their own lands, but flowing in to possess the lands of the lazar white nations. And it seems to me not impossible that then we shall be bidden to resume our business.

FAMINE.

I wonder, now, if thy view of the white race is at all coloured by its numerous production of physicians?

PESTILENCE.

Look, our Mother beckons us; it is time for work.

FAMINE.

Come then; much scope remains to us as yet.

II

MINOS AND A GHOST

MINOS AND A GHOST

There Minos stands,
Grinning with ghastly feature: he, of all
Who enter, strict examining the crimes,
Gives sentence, and dismisses them beneath,
According as he foldeth him around:
For when before him comes the ill-fated soul,
It all confesses; and that judge severe
Of sins, considering what place in hell
Suits the transgression, with his tail so oft
Himself encircles, as degrees beneath
He dooms it to descend.

Inferno, V.

MINOS.

(*His tail lying straight out behind him.*)

You had better not attempt any lying, because I have the truth about you recorded here. This examination is mercifully ordained as a chance for you to exhibit shame, and thereby perhaps gain a mitigated punishment. Now then; you were a musical critic?

GHOST.

I am proud to say I was.

MINOS.

Hum! [*Minos' tail rustles.*

GHOST.

What are you doing with your tail?

MINOS.

Settling it more comfortably. So far, once round my body seems tolerable.—You were employed in the Scarab Department of the British Museum. What induced you to increase your labours by undertaking musical criticism in your spare time?

GHOST.

A laudable desire to purge Art; and annoyance at seeing praise given to music that I disliked and could not understand.

MINOS.

Had there been any influence in your life to stimulate your power of appreciating music?

GHOST.

My sister used to play *The Maiden's Prayer;* and I had read *Music and Morals* by Mr. Haweis.

MINOS.

I suggest that you approached the criticism of music without any very clear idea of the particular excellence at which Music aims. I gather from your position in the Scarab Department that you were an intellectual person in your way. May I put it to you that your selection of Music as a thing whereon to exercise your critical faculties was a mistake?—Since you probably demanded of Music that it should possess qualities

and appeals that belong naturally to other portions of the human activity.

GHOST.

Heavens, Minos, you talk like a Mozartian or a Brahmsite. I know, in the old days Music was made a kind of mystery; but we critics have changed all that. As soon as we acquired the influence we now have, we began to insist that Music should be a factor in intellectual progress, and leave attitudinizing and emotional vapouring. The function of the critic is not only to keep the flame of Art pure and steady, to snuff its wick free from the crusts of bygone burnings, but also to prevent its powerful light from being squandered unthriftily. For while the illuminations of the Arts are scattered broadcast, what energizing can they give to the mind of man? But let the judicious controlling lens of criticism concentrate all the lights of the arts on one spot of the brain, on the region of Reasonable Intellectuality, and a noble heat will result, a bright glow in the brain able quite to consume all the heaped-up modern problems that now are like to smother it. This is what Art can do, when it follows the guidance of critics. And without critics, see what absurdities Art drifted into! Imagine a man hesitating between Socialism and Anarchy, or between Polygamy and Eugenics, or between Overhead and Underground Connections for Tramways,—imagine such a man, I say, taking his posed brain to a performance of the *Midsummer Night's*

Dream or the *Seventh Symphony!* How are his problem-tormented wits helped by such debauches of disquieting useless beauty? [*Minos' tail rustles.*

MINOS.

Your harangue has again disquieted my tail, I perceive.—It is recorded that you desired a time when concerts should consist wholly of modern music and should abandon "the traditional insertion in their progammes of classical items." Do you remember that?

GHOST.

Perfectly. Where was the use, I asked, in performing the music of men who died fifty years or a century ago, when there are men living now who can write music which reflects the desires of our time? Do we use the machinery of those times?—Nor should we use the music.

MINOS.

Perhaps you can remember more of your writing to like effect?

GHOST.

Yes; for example,—"I want fresh red meat for my musical fare, not mummy. Who reads Spenser now? And who now, if they were not forced down our ears by obscurantist conductors, would listen to Papa Haydn's tunes? The modern mind must have modern music, if music is to be of any use to it!"

MINOS.

So; you thought that music should reflect the "needs of the time"?

GHOST.

Certainly. [*Minos' tail rustles.*

MINOS.

Thrice round my body seems to my tail more comfortable now. Recite something more which will enable me to understand your position more clearly.—I may here remark that in these recitations you are not only compelled to give me the written words, but among them to interfuse also those secret thoughts which on earth you were not hardy enough to put into language. I mention this in order that, now you find yourself forced to reveal those thoughts uncompromisingly, they may even yet make you a little ashamed.

GHOST.

I have noticed it; I have with satisfaction noticed it, for those thoughts are lovely to me. Here, then, is some more. "The basis of all modern thought is Science, or Exactitude of Thinking. Philosophy and Metaphysics must now be erected on Scientific ground; and Art must be similarly founded. Hitherto, Music has been the laggard of the Arts. It has inhabited the vague, and often unhealthy, region of mere emotion. But nowadays the modern mind demands an appeal first to its reason, and then, through that,

if at all, to its emotions. It distrusts raw, unruled emotionizing. The other Arts have had to adopt this course; drama, for example, is no longer written in poetry but in prose; for who now wants to feel the unnamed and useless emotions which poetical rhythms can evoke? The serious playgoer demands an art which will illumine the practical conduct of life, and he sees that he gets it. Music must come into line with the other Arts. Here is a man who writes modern music, based on literature, even on philosophy. It is the Music of Exact Thought. Let us see that we get plenty of it at our concerts, and less of the old unpractical stuff."

MINOS.

You wrote, or thought, all that?

GHOST.

I did. [*The tail rustles.*

MINOS.

Hullo, my tail has four coils in it now.—There was something about Imitative Music, too, I fancy?

GHOST.

Shall I recite that also?—"Why all this fluster about Imitative Music? Does not a poet's metre gallop when he wishes to convey a galloping horse? And what is all painting but superlative imitation? I seriously advance the opinion that development of music in the direction of imitation will result in an Art as superior to 'classical' music as Velasquez'

painting is to Greek key-patterns and whorls and similar meaningless devisings of line. With progressing Civilization comes increased delight in technique. A pretty melody was very pleasant once to listen to; but does not sheer melody—melody unrelated to any definite thought—really emanate from the crude barbarian in man? And that is a part of us which we would fain outgrow. What delights the modern ear, and what ought to delight it, is the noise of the streets, or the smashing of crockery, justly rendered on a string orchestra."

MINOS.

You demanded, in fact, an art which should be *of* the world, not better than the world?

GHOST.

That phrase, "better than the world," implies idealism, which is now quite exploded on earth, however it may be doing here. [*The tail rustles.*

MINOS.

Just look at my tail: it has wrapped my body round five times. Your conversation evidently enlivens it.—I have a note of a count against you in the matter of song-writing.

GHOST.

O yes, I remember that.—"To put a piece of poetry of several verses to an arbitrary *tune*,—what can be more absurd than that? How can such 'music'

illumine the author's meaning? What possible interplay can there be between the verbal thought and such adventitious casual decoration? But the modern song-writer approaches his task from a reasonable and genuinely artistic standpoint. Every idea that marches through the poet's words is simultaneously seized by the musician and displayed relentlessly. A heart throbs,—mark the muffled drums! A maiden pants,—cornets staccato! Courage,—trombones blare it! Tenderness,—flutes insinuate it! A woman hates,—acid fiddles! A man loves,—bass tuba! A star twinkles,—the triangle's part! Wind blows,—chromatic scales! A death-rattle,—trills on the bassoon! This is the true marriage between Music and Poetry. The old song-form was but a forged certificate. With justice, we now prefer our songs in an orchestral setting, on account of the vastly enhanced powers of imitation so acquired over a pianoforte accompaniment." [*The tail rustles.*

MINOS.

You have upset my tail again. And I really must interpose here. Man has in him both thought which is verbal, and thought which is not and never can be verbal; the latter is to the former as the sea is to the land,—unintelligible, unstable immensity, of unknowable extent and temper, not for ordinary travel; nevertheless, the region whence comes health. It is variously called Soul, Emotion, or, by such as you, the Savage Part of Man. The only ship which can sail it is Art.—You shake your head; let me shift my meta-

phor. I think this will do: the duty of a poet is so to precipitate his verbal thought as to cause an aura of non-verbal thought to cling about it: as a fine dust scattered in water-vapour will, on settling, bring down with it a condensation of moisture. The musician's art, however, used to be able to decoy this surrounding steam of unreasoned thought into comprehension, that is to say, into æsthetic form, without requiring, to bring it down, the aid of that more ponderous kind of thought, the thought which can be given in words; he condensed non-verbal thought directly into *musical thought*. The melody (which should mean harmony as well) in those days *was* that which the poet had with difficulty ensnared; it was his emotion wrought immediately into sensible shape. But you appear altogether to have desired the limitation of music to verbal thought, to force on it gratuitously the disadvantages which poetry cannot avoid, but which music, in an admirable way, can if it wants to.

GHOST.

Of course; to develop one of your numerous and indifferently managed similes, I may say that my whole critical career has been taken up with encouraging those who harness music to useful occupations on the crop-bearing land, and discouraging those who let her wander aimlessly on the barren sea. (*The tail has rustled again.*) I suppose it's not much use explaining the modern attitude to you, Minos. But what hope is there of civilization progressing unless we devote all

our attention to sane, practical, reasonable thought? Mystics, and other dealers in your non-verbal thought, are the true opponents of civilization's advance. We don't want beautiful clouds in the air; we want a good head of water in our aqueducts to turn our mill-wheels. And unless the Arts learn this quickly, modern man will have done with them altogether. That is what the arrival of Exact Music means; we critics have demanded it, for we are the men who know what kind of art the time requires; and the earth is full of it, thanks to us.

[*The tail rustles violently.*

MINOS.

There are now eight coils in my tail, the significance of which seems entirely lost on you. Have you anything more to say?

GHOST.

Yes; I never quite liked to say it on earth, but I will say it to you. In modern life the fundamental matter is Economics. (*Minos' tail twitches.*) Every other portion of human thought now is by the way, at bottom nothing more than an amusement. The only really important thing for modern civilized man to consider is Economics. Therein lies the solution of every modern problem. This being so, can music afford to neglect its treatment? What more vital art could there be than a music concerned purely with Economics? When the man arises who can write the

Sinfonia Economica so plainly demanded by the modern soul, then will music have grown to its adult stature. This is my most sacred opinion, and I am ready to be damned for it.

[*Minos' tail has swished into its ninth coil with a brusque clap of decision.*

MINOS.

Quite so.—Demons, to the Ninth Circle with him, next to Judas.

III

A BEGGAR AND HIS DOG

A BEGGAR AND HIS DOG

(ON THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH)

BEGGAR.

What! My old cur! This does me good, to find you here.

DOG.

Ah! the man who was my master.

BEGGAR.

Talkative too! Better and better! You'll be a choicer companion here even than you were down yonder.

DOG.

Do you think, then, I am ordained for all eternity to supply you with companionship?

BEGGAR.

Eh? I don't think anything at all: I know who's master. You know it too, you were best! A pity, when they taught you speech, they let you forget your station. Blood! but you hold your tail a deal higher now than you did when it had a bone in it.

DOG.

And you briskly tread your seeing way along the firm air in a manner not at all like your old blind,

grumbling shuffle over paving-stones, in the days when you were lugged along by my galled neck.

BEGGAR.

Merry dog! Mind that you are a mongrel still: Heaven itself cannot alter that. And, as I say, I'm still your master, or strangely in the wrong. If it's a stately pair of ears you have now, see if I can't still cuff a canker into them.

DOG.

I suppose the change in my teeth from substance to shadow will be precisely proportionate to the same change in your calves?

BEGGAR.

And what do you make of that, my thoughtful cur?

DOG.

What I conclude is this: that in heaven, as on earth, my bite may still be something.

BEGGAR.

Now, just let me sit and laugh at you a little. This is an admirable change—from a flesh-dog barking in his throat and a kind of a clockwork in his brain, to a seraph-dog with a reasoning head and a tongue tasting fine words. Now, why couldn't you contrive to be like this when you were alive? You would have been my fortune, sure.

DOG.

Do you think I should have then gone round the town with my neck harnest painfully to your wrist, steering you through the traffic ?

BEGGAR.

Not you ; you would have travelled in a railway-saloon and eaten rump steak off silver plate. And I should have dined off gold, and had a bath of champagne wine whenever I itched, and dried myself with sables.

DOG.

Well, well : it does no good to be angry here. That saves you from what might have been an interesting experiment, the effect of ghostly teeth on ghostly calves. But you deserve it, you and your tedious assumption of mastership. However, you are a newcomer, and doubtless do not yet realize that we are all alike up here. Here, whatever life has achieved, we all share. You are surprised at my condition : is there nothing surprising in your own ? Letting alone your change from blindness to delighted vision, are you the same as you were in life ? Think, now ; just imagine yourself, exactly as you perceive yourself now, sent back to the earth. You are still near enough to the grave to imagine that.

BEGGAR.

If I went back to earth as I am now ? Why, I

should be the grandest philosopher, poet, musician, sculptor, preacher, politician, soldier, thief, and stockbroker, that ever was in the world. I know it! But here I'm nobody; that is, I'm just the same as everybody else. It seems, I can't even lord it over you!

DOG.

And no one can lord it over you.

BEGGAR.

That's something. All the same, I still want to do some lording myself.

DOG.

Indeed, you are a newcomer. The desire to lord wears off in time, just like the desire to serve. You feel strange at first; and therefore do not yet perceive the difference between being nobody, and being everybody yet still yourself.

BEGGAR.

I certainly admit that finding myself here is a very queer business; it's all so strange that only just now have I stopt swearing about it.

DOG.

Why did you stop?—The human trick of swearing has always greatly interested me; it is something quite undoggish.

BEGGAR.

Why did I stop ?—An innocent-looking ghost came by who, it seems, thought I was shouting Hallelujah in a foreign tongue. That stopt me. That showed me swearing is no good up here. And yet, all the same, damn my soul if it isn't blasted queer ! What am I doing here at all ?—I quite lookt to go to the other place ; I had braced myself up for the flames.

DOG.

What other place ?

BEGGAR.

Hell, of course.

DOG.

Hell ?—Ah, yes, hell ; I know what you mean ; I've heard it discussed.—Why should you be looking out for hell ?

BEGGAR.

Sin, you know, sin. I was as full of sin as a boil is full of dirt. But I'm here ! I suppose this *is* Heaven ?

DOG.

Anyway, it's the other side of death. . . . Sin ! Yes, there is another thing has always interested me.

BEGGAR.

Leave it alone ! Don't begin on that here ! I know all you have to say on that business. Something else quite undoggish, no doubt ?

DOG.

You appear touchy on this question of sin.

BEGGAR.

To a man or a woman I would not at all mind talking freely and pleasantly about sin. But to a dog, —I am, as you say, touchy on the matter.

DOG.

Why to a dog especially ?

BEGGAR.

Now don't you be clever, drawing me on to admit the great human shame. I'm not going to have you walking off on the tips of your claws and flirting your tail at me, when you have choused me into confessing that man, made to be so much finer than you beasts, with his high faculties and talents, his knowledge of himself and of right and wrong, and his immortal soul, yet uses all these notable powers to stuff himself up with villainy, and, in fact, to turn himself into the scorn of all you beasts, into the only thing that sins.—My word ! I find I've a rare power of gab up here !

DOG.

But if you will keep quiet and be not too fierce, I may perhaps console you a little about this very question.—Man, you say, has an immortal soul; and you meant by that to mark him off from dogs.

But I am a dog, and I am here ; I have passed through death, changed just as you are changed by the experience. Am not I then an immortal soul ?

BEGGAR.

So you are ! yes, I suppose there is no getting away from that.—After all, you were a good dog ; it is no real humiliation to share spiritual immortality with you.

DOG.

We will let that pass.—Nevertheless, there was a difference between us in this matter down yonder. You professed to be conscious of your immortality ; at least, being human, there was always a chance of you considering yourself immortal ; whereas it never entered me and never could enter me, to think myself mortal or immortal. I simply knew, in my fashion, that I was alive at any particular moment, and that was all I needed.

BEGGAR.

This is no doubt true enough.

DOG.

And just now you were saying that my earthly brain seemed to you like a kind of clockwork. But you taught me a deal of things.

BEGGAR.

Certainly.

Dog.

That was not like clockwork, then. And if you will remember honestly, I think you will perceive that you never really found the ends of my capacity for learning. If I failed, you were as much to blame as I was; it was as much your impatience, and your clumsiness of signifying your meaning, as it was my stupidity. The powers that were in your brain were also in mine; only, in mine there was not the acute consciousness of the powers, the sense of a constant relation between myself and my powers; which means, the power deliberately to set my powers at a required work. But whenever you managed to dispel my darkness in this matter by lending me, as it were, a piece of your own conscious light, then my brain workt perfectly as you would have it work, perfectly as your own, indeed. This, by the way, constituted your mastery over me,—your supplying me with rays of your own brighter consciousness.

Beggar.

All this, too, I am ready to admit.

Dog.

It seems, then, that the real difference between you and me was merely in this matter of consciousness. I might almost say that you were nothing more than a dog with the acute consciousness of being a dog added,—certainly an immensely important addition.

BEGGAR.

So dog conscious of being dog becomes man ?

DOG.

In effect, yes. But we must not go too fast. I need hardly remark on that which is the most obvious fact to us up here ;—that we are all one, all the one Main Thing. Simply, we are existence ; and existence is one. But we are also ourselves.

BEGGAR.

The first is all right ; but what are *we ?*

DOG.

I see you partly take me. We are all the Main Thing, which is interminable ; and yet we are all terminated things within that Thing. What is the manner of this ? What is it that enables us to be not only the one grand existence, but equally our own existences ?—It is at any rate plain that nothing but this paradox is credible.

BEGGAR.

We might, I suppose, each have an essential share of the ultimate reality (Lord ! how glib my tongue is nowadays among these queer words !) which we invest, or, as it were, embody (though doubtless 'tis the wrong word for a heavenly conversation), in our own qualities or accidents. In that way, we should all be essentially

the same, the partakers of the grand existence; and at the same time all be accidentally our own selves.

DOG.

It will not do. Where do we get these accidents from? They exist, therefore they must be property of the Main Existence. To that everything we have must belong. There is at bottom neither accident nor essence; it is all one. Therefore we cannot be *ourselves* by virtue of any qualifying accident which peculiarly belongs to ourselves. Although we are altogether things in ourselves as well as things in the main thing, we cannot supply ourselves with ourselves; nor even be the special original owners of what makes us individual. That is not only unreasonable: it is unimaginable. I take all this to be self-evident. I do not know whether what I am now going to say will seem to you equally inescapable: namely, that we none of us have direct relationship one with another; we only have immediate relationship with the prime formless existence in which all formed existence is contained; and it is only through the universality of this immediate relationship between the many formed and the one unformed, that *mediate* relationship between form and form is possible, and is. Hence, that which allows of form is not the private property of the formed; for then one form could be directly related to another form. But since the formed individual is directly related to the unformed interminable, and can indeed only exist by virtue of that

relation, I conclude that the state of being a formed individual is really and ultimately the property of the unformed immensity of prime existence. Yet again I insist, that this necessary conclusion takes nothing from the completeness of individual existence.

BEGGAR.

To show you the fallacy of your contention, I will, reluctantly, take that human quality or accident we have just mentioned; I mean sin. And instead of your fine sounding Main Thing and Grand Existence, we will be simple, and say God. Now see how absurd your talk; to make out sin a property of God!

DOG.

Why absurd?

BEGGAR.

Why? But it is horrible, a notion not to be endured.

DOG.

To you, perhaps. To me, a dog, it seems all as just as to say dimension is a property of God; not that I say that; but mankind often says it quite happily, and calls it pantheism.

BEGGAR.

This merely shows your eternal inferiority to man, your inability to see, even in heaven, the horror of accusing God of sin.

Dog.

I explain it otherwise. You, I must repeat, are a newcomer, and there is a whiff of the earth still upon you. And on earth you men are conscious of immortality,—as, at any rate, a possibility. Now immortality is the perfection of vitality. But you perceived (how could you else?) that your earthly being was not all for immortality; and your earthly being thence became to you an imperfect vitality. With that, however, you were not likely to be content. Indeed, the more conscious you became of yourself as a mortal imperfection, the fiercer your need of an immortal perfection somewhere. But you perceived—more, I dare say, in an emotion than in a train of reasoning—that you and everything else belonged not only to yourselves but also to some immensity, hardly approachable by thought, in which your lives were particles. But the interminable, the unformed, is detested by your nature, which will have everything it perceives brought into a tolerable effigy; that is, into some likeness to yourself, your reason and your desires. For when you question existence, you take care to receive an answer which you can comprehend; at least, an answer which you can plainly perceive *is* some kind of an answer. What more natural, then, that you should imagine this incomprehensible including vastness as the desired perfection? What more likely that this already formed and powerful desire should impose itself on the surrounding shadow

of vastness you so strongly desired to reduce somehow into form? But now, what you perceived most clearly within yourselves was this quality, Sin. It was the one inescapable verity of your self-knowledge; and became, therefore, in your view the characteristic of self; and indeed it *is* the characteristic of human personality.

BEGGAR.

I know all about that. You need not tell it me.

DOG.

I am not sure that you do know all about it.—You, however, had already determined that your earthly being was an imperfect kind of being; and sin is the obvious quality of that earthly being. Sin then becomes the typical imperfection; and easily therefore a thing not to be thought of as having aught to do with your desired perfection.

BEGGAR.

If I understand the tone of your discourse, you do not find sin reprehensible?

DOG.

Reprehensible! It is sin that makes man what he is on the earth; it is the lack of sin makes us dogs serve man. Human sin to the mind of a dog is reprehensible only because it is enviable!

BEGGAR.

I should like to hear some more about that. But

you have not yet made it clear what is the manner of self-existence, if the individual is not to be regarded as essential reality modified by qualities that are truly its own.

DOG.

Individuality is simply a peculiar condition of the main thing; and we must not regard it as a self-imposed condition. It was no substantial addition that caused individual existence to appear in the inchoate, the formless Beginning; not as any novelty of creation would it appear, but rather (to speak intelligibly, that is conveniently) as an invention, as the discovery and fulfilment of a possibility. Whatever makes individuality, and even the individuality itself, must be property of that in which it was made. Otherwise, we are landed in an intolerable notion,—that existence, namely qualifying existence, can be supplied by something other than the main existence. The quality of individual being must be supplied by the main existence to itself; it must qualify itself. And the only possible quality, therefore, is—*arrangement.*

BEGGAR.

What in heaven do you mean?

DOG.

Watch me. I will illustrate my meaning. Look now: I sit down, thus; I prick my ears, I set my head a little to one side, I loll my tongue, and I curl my tail,—so. You have taken it all in?

BEGGAR.

There's nothing to take in, except the ghost of a dog looking extremely silly.

DOG.

Exactly. Now I get out of my posture; and now I no longer look silly. But the silliness *was* something. I had caused in my nature the existence of an event which, though altogether made of my nature, was yet something in itself. I had, in fact, produced an *arrangement* of my parts, and you perceived the arrangement to be itself a *thing*, a *looking silly*. This, now, is the nearest I can get, in analogy, to what happens when individual existence occurs in the main existence; it is by virtue of some arrangement in the nature of the latter. Just as, if you have a lot of marbles, and you put them into some pattern, you have produced in the marbles, without adding to their substance, a thing, an existence, that was not there before; the pattern is an actuality; yet is only marbles. But my first instance was the better one; because then it was I myself who, as it were, added to myself my own formative desire, and thereby added to my nature an extra nature, the sum of the special arrangement of my parts, which you noticed as a *looking silly;* a thing which, though it was still included in my nature, was also its own existence.

BEGGAR.

But what has all this to do with sin?

Dog.

Be a little patient. I am gently pushing you into a position from which you may regard, calmly and peaceably, that thing you now take shame for, that Sin of yours; and, I hope, you may even come to regard it with a kind of pride.

Beggar.

You are gentle enough, without doubt; the progress is certainly imperceptible.

Dog.

Yes? And yet we are almost there.—If you have properly graspt what I have just been saying, you will easily conceive the affair of existence as one continual endless flux of Being, which is for ever (and, we suppose, for the purpose of some unknown delight in itself) imposing on itself its own formative desire, thereby arranging itself into a multitude of discrete patterns. Individual existence is a pattern in the main existence, a posture of its nature; it is not only included in, it *is*, the main existence; and yet, by virtue of being a pattern, it is itself. All this, as a speculative analogy, is obvious enough; what is obvious too, is that the patterns greatly differ in certainty: some are vague, some distinct. And the more distinct the pattern, the more thoroughly individual and discrete must be the consequent existence. So now, is it too much to ask you to conceive this also, that the individual

existence, which has arrived at the power of sinning, is thereby proven to be more completely formed to a self-existing pattern than any other, more closely and firmly contracted into a disposition which holds it fixt in its own nature, in the nature of its arrangement, within, and yet not utterly owned and domineered by, the unavoidable flux of general, unappointed nature? For that which can sin is proved thereby not only capable of knowing its own existence, but also of acting upon the knowledge. It is, to go on speaking in the manner I have been using, pattern which knows itself to be pattern. And is not, therefore, the quality of pattern in it brought to a kind of perfection? The complexity of it has been so strangely gathered into a unity of ordered arrangement, that it is itself aware of being a fixity defined in the unlimited flux, and is moreover determined to employ that awareness of self-existence in asserting it against the surrounding flux; and the determination is sin. Are you ready to conceive this?

BEGGAR.

Honestly, I am not sure, whether or no. But what is it you mean by sin? It appears to me, you must somehow mean more than murder, cheating, forgery, rape, thieving, sacrilege, and the rest.

DOG.

Those are unimportant to me. But they are portions of what I mean, the unpleasant portions. I mean a thing which contains these, apart from which these

cannot be decently considered in speculation ; a thing for which there seems no convenient word except sin. What is narrowly and especially known for sin is perhaps peculiarly notable ; but if you look at it, it is for ever imperceptibly shading on all sides into a multitude of other things. Philosophy sees them all as the kingdom of sin.

BEGGAR.

Just tell me what exactly you do mean, please.

DOG.

You must have the patience to let me particularize my analogy. It must now be specially an affair of motion. Imagine, then, the grand flux of Being, which we have been supposing, as if it were a vast stream of motion, absolutely constant in direction : for so it must be, if the analogy is to express unity and continuity. And now imagine a particle within that stream, a particle which, though borne along by the stream, has somehow got a motion of its own. The motion of the particle is therefore not the same as that of the surrounding stream ; it is slower, or quicker, or else it is oblique to the main direction, according as its own special motion is, relative to the flow of the stream, backwards or forwards or sideways. Well, then, man's power of differing in motion from the general motion of the stream which includes him is what I mean by man's power of sin. And if I, a dog, free from your human prejudices, begin to inquire into this

power of yours, I find myself utterly unable to divide what you consider the unpleasant and shameful sinfulness from an infinite number of quite other qualities, some of them things which you yourselves especially admire in yourselves. By calling all these things sin, however, I simply emphasize throughout the whole class the general characteristic which is so specially and admittedly unmistakable in the wickednesses which have the common name of sin : the capital characteristic, namely, that sin is a wilful altering of the motion imposed by the main tendency of existence. But in my speculation I leave your wickedness behind ; your sins are all one to me, all processes of the same amazing faculty, all included in man's unique power to add his own individual motion to the motion of general being. If I am to call perverse sexuality a sin, I cannot but call a lifelong chastity equally a sin. As to how this power of individual motion came about, it is not easy to say. But we must remember that man is not only his own existence, but is also the general being ; and having dimly become conscious of himself, able to look in on himself, that which is man in him perceives the operation in him of that which is general being,—what you call instincts and lusts. And this consciousness enables him to tamper with his lusts, urging and aiding some, holding others in a brake, and others deflecting ; the result of all which is, the power to add, by some law of supernal mechanics, his own peculiar motion to the motion given him by the grand stream of main existence. And it appears

that the process, having once begun, reacts upon itself; being self-conscious, man sins; sinning, he becomes thereby still more keenly self-conscious; and so it goes on. What is certain, at any rate, is (to go back to our patterns) that man is the completest and most closely and strongly organized pattern the main existence has yet contrived within itself; and the proof of that is, man can sin: the pattern of him can act on that which made him a pattern. He is not bound incapable to the onward undeviating pleasure of that nature wherein he was formed; he can do some of his own pleasure therein. We dogs are the people to know that! Moreover, he has not to wait for this heaven here, in order to find existence consciously admirable; he does not require for that the riches heaven can give to all life, the riches of whatever powers and pleasures life has yet achieved; but man is able, if he likes, to be curiously delighting in life even while he is in mortality; and he is so able, just because he is the creature that can sin. Sin, in your narrow sense, in the shameful sense, may be the price he pays for it; and yet I cannot help thinking even this, or some of it, may have a part in the work, the work of making man in the long run more conscious of living; and if that does not, as it ought, make him more enjoyably alive, it, at least, gives him the chance of being so. Here, then, we regard man as, in some sort, the justification of individual life; individuality is at its best in man, because in man it can sin, it can be actively wilful against the mighty flux of unqualified

nature. But we must not let ourselves be too much engaged by the notion of sin as disobedience; the thing never to be forgotten is, that sin is the will of God, or the force of existence, acting upon itself. Whether the main existence be specially desirous of forming itself into a perfect pattern; and if so, whether man satisfies the desire; and whether it takes any sort of pleasure in knowing itself active within and upon itself, by means of its organization into man;—these, perhaps, are fancies which we can only play with. But, up here, we are inclined to assume that the last may be confidently affirmed; for here, everything that happens is a pleasure, pleasing by the mere fact of happening: the more event the more delight; and it will not be too fantastic to believe that man's wilfulness against his surroundings—his sin, indeed—supplies the main existence with the sensation which is event.—But have I at all made clear to you how it is that we dogs, when we look back on mortality, find that man was there enviable above everything else by reason of his sin?—I have at least repaid you a little for all the talking I had from you on earth!

BEGGAR.

It has been a pleasant sounding and a persuasive discourse; and, indeed, I think you have proved to me that there may be something handsome to be said for sin.

DOG.

Proved! No, no. I was but dealing in analogy;

and in analogy is no proof. It can but exhibit one's belief. That is all I set out to do.

BEGGAR.

One thing I do not quite see. If our individual existence be like the existence of a pattern, does it not seem strange we should have survived the disturbance of death? For I should have thought a pattern, an arrangement, of all things the most eminently destructible.

DOG.

So should I.

BEGGAR.

Can you explain it then?

DOG.

I cannot, unless——

BEGGAR.

Well? unless what?

DOG.

Unless, after all, you and I be only notions in a poet's brain.

IV

EARTH AND A CROWD

EARTH AND A CROWD

EARTH.

I fear there is no help for it. You have had a longer spell of life than I allow to most of your kind; but your time is at length nearly finisht. You must pass.

THE CROWD.

But why must it be so? Why, my Mother, will you deal so unjustly? Why must the simple grandeur of my violence, the angry majesty of my purely passionate nature, fail so soon, and pass away, disintegrated, into these odious little particles of men and women, these disgusting smallnesses of my psychoplasm, rotted into separateness by vitiating reason? Over these human molecules that are my body, I, their soul, have mightily presided, and gathered the whole of them into the vast form of my desire; and must I, the Crowd hugely created out of their numbers into single consciousness, perish; and leave them, the bits and fragments of my mortal instrument, still existing? Such death infects backward all my life with its indignity. Must my greatness and my fierce untamable simplicity at once putrefy into this horde of unmeaning littleness, these scattered, useless, crawling men and women, offensive with reason?

EARTH.

I have had these complaints before. They cannot move me. Indeed, it is not I who made you. If it were, you might lament with some purpose to me. But you were not made by my projecting a piece of my consciousness into this streaming drift of humanity, thereby efforming it, like an image-bearing light thrown into smoke. You had a profounder and a vaguer origin than that.

CROWD.

Tell me what it is; that I, at least, before I die, know the injustice I may rightfully accuse.

EARTH.

Nothing may be rightfully accused of anything; except indeed that which complains; for it must be accused of hurting itself with folly. But as to the mode of your coming into being, it is hard for me to say anything for certain. This only can I give you: the possibility of consciousness is inherent throughout created being; and wherever there is organization of particles,—complete, mutual dependence, interaction, a firm arrangement—there and thereby the possibility comes to success: consciousness arrives. And, in an infinite scale, consciousness is always within and within and within other consciousness. All consciousness is temporary; but some may have a vast endurance, like mine, others are only in being, like yours,

for short and casual moments. However—if it be of any comfort to you before you die—in spite of your brief existence you may truthfully regard yourself as a perfect type of the work of that grand desire which prompts the whole incredible movement of existence,—the desire to be for ever decorating its pomp with consciousness; not merely to be for ever organizing complexities of unconsciousness into beautiful conscious unities, but to be so organizing complexities of consciousness also,—into larger forms of presiding consciousness, of which the ingredient kinds are the substantial instrument. For consider yourself, you, a Crowd. How did you happen to be? A number of men and women were going to and fro in the streets, diversely busy, nudging, jostling, elbowing, shouldering one another, breathing each other's breath, crammed all together like fish in a weir; but each was a separate consciousness, and in each one the grand desire of existence, whereof I spoke, had come to finality: there was nothing there but a number of men and women. Suddenly, a flash of mighty impulse strikes through the formless, multitudinous mass. Some event descended there, like a Sahara whirlwind on the desert sands; and it seized on and embodied its viewless form in the loose particles of men and women; in a twink their many littlenesses were rapt into a tremendous singleness. The whole of them became organic, became a Crowd; the careering activity of your simple immense consciousness began. For these human particles were mightily prest together

by the formative power of the event, which indeed shaped itself therein, as the whirlwind in the lifted sand; it was such an event as caused between human particle and particle a much more vehement interaction and mutual dependence than is common among them, so much so that it smote them, their numerous consciousnesses, into that organic arrangement which makes further consciousness possible. They were, indeed, churned; yes, as in milk the many little fine-skinned balls of oil are burst with churning and run together into a mass of butter, so the throng of men and women was churned into one firm, intricate mass. Like scattered viscous oil, the human drops of individual emotion, each with its central gleam of consciousness, were amassed in a single fluid, and, as always, the mass was its own consciousness, and by virtue of that was an altogether new thing; indeed, it was a Crowd, it was you. It might almost seem as if the urging power in existence had broke loose from its appointed finality in man, and had, though but for a moment, shown that here also it can reach beyond its achievement in its infinite formation of consciousness and consciousness again, over and over, within and within. For certainly, in a Crowd, many human molecules have been wrought into a being notably different from them, and singly presiding over all their originating multitude; just as a bar of iron is an existence quite different from the sum of its many component existences, and is, in fact, strictly, *a Crowd of iron molecules.*

CROWD.

You give me a hope which consoles me even in my perishing; but I know not whether my hope is what you intend to give. For it seems that I may be only a trial of what is to come perfectly; I mean that, as creatures of my large kind appear momentarily in patches of humanity, so at last the whole vast number of men and women on the earth may be wrought and fixt for ever in a Crowd. Do you suppose this possible? I should like to think, now that I am passing, that my kind of existence will at last preside triumphant over the petty and not too pleasant natures of my component psychoplasm, men.

EARTH.

To be sure, this would be nothing in itself unbelievable. Such a result is not unheard of in life's processes. For what are ants and bees but creatures that exist in a permanent Crowd? And, in a less degree, all animals that go in herds are examples of crowd-nature. Yet I fear that even in this I cannot give you consolation. It is true that even among men themselves the notion has been proposed, that all their tribes might some day grow up into one vast unifying common consciousness, a thing masterful and lambent over all their separate entities, a single conscious vitality forming the whole and having it as body, even as you, a Crowd, are lambent and masterful over the people that are your psychoplasm; and in-

deed even as the consciousness in each man is lambent and masterful over the innumerous consciousnesses that make up *his* psychoplasm. But the notion has only amused the lighter sort of men; it has never been gravely considered by those who are seriously determined to exercise the power which they call thinking. For it is quite plain that man has in him a quality which makes his permanent production of a Crowd a thing wonderfully unlikely. This quality it is that has made man so far unique in the process of existence, and, by the way, makes so very transient the formation amid human particles of larger consciousnesses such as you. And it is the quality named sin.

CROWD.

I suppose, then, it must be a quality which makes man's individual consciousness something peculiarly stubborn in fashion, and strictly fastened up in itself; for plainly, whenever small numerous entities are stricken together so as to form by organism a larger entity, there must be a certain welding of the particles, and a mutual contamination in them; otherwise both organism and resulting consciousness must be very imperfect.

EARTH.

You have hit it. That unusual strictness of individuality is the effect of sin; though precisely what sin is I can but darkly guess. Man's nature, by the mere cohesion within it, has formed a sort of tough envelope about it; and this makes it difficult for men

to become thoroughly organized particles of mutually penetrating influence, composing a single intricacy. That, as you yourself prove, is only momentarily possible for men.

CROWD.

Then the universal process which is always increasing consciousness has stopt short in man?

EARTH.

That would be hard to believe. But that it has in man taken to a novel sort of growth I very readily believe. Man is not only conscious; of that very fact he is (or can be) conscious. And if I can skill anything of that which is coming, it is in self-consciousness that man has now his possibility of growth. He is to become perfectly aware of himself. I can even imagine the manner of his perfection.

CROWD.

If it has nothing to do with my nature, I cannot pretend to be interested.

EARTH.

Ah, but in a way it has to do with you and the nature of Crowds. For man perfectly aware of himself will be man perfectly aware of what he is; and what is he but (like everything else) a consciousness immersed in, and infinitely going into the composition of, roundure and roundure of including vast and vaster crowd-like consciousness? Yes; for though, as we

have agreed, the fresh formation among men of superhuman consciousness is difficult and, when achieved, is never more than a thing of short hours; nevertheless, in spite of this, man has of old and from his beginning, along with every other earthly creature, held his existence within the region of a larger consciousness. Of this, in some incredible manner, he is to become aware; *this* novelty, of particles becoming aware of the general mass they maintain, is to take the place of organizing new kinds of single consciousness in the stuff of man's multitudes. Yet still man will be perfectly aware of himself, of his own consciousness. Nay, the more he is aware of the conscious vastness including him, the more thereby intensely aware of his own personal consciousness will he become. This is hard to say, for it is hard to suppose. Man is certainly far enough from it at present; but by the signs I read in him, it is what I look for. You know, that the men, in whom your nature was formed, though they themselves were still conscious, and so conscious of the work you forced them to (as a man forces his limbs), yet of you yourself they were not at all aware. Indeed, until quite recently, no man would have admitted that a Crowd was a single distinct conscious animal, made out of men and women, as man himself is made of cells. The very intensity of man's own consciousness strangely makes it difficult for him to believe that consciousness is general throughout existence. But as it is with man in a Crowd, so it is all through; nothing easily perceives that its own

consciousness may be a particle ordered in a larger consciousness. For consider me, the Earth; what is my conscious being but a Crowd, a grand, perdurable Crowd, made out of all the unreckonable beings that compose me? But so far neither man nor anything else is thoroughly aware of me, the great Crowd-being dominating the whole terrestrial. Nay, I myself know that I must be a particle in that conscious being which is the organism of stars wherein I belong; and that organism of stars is a particle in the consciousness which is the universe, the Crowd containing, dominating, and made out of the whole of created things; and this inclusion of consciousness within consciousness, crowd within crowd, must go on for ever. I say, I know this must be so; but I am not truly *aware* of it. Men, too, or the best of them, know that the intricacy of existence must truly be some sort of a unity; for, indeed, to perceive intricacy is to perceive unity. But to be *aware* of the unity wherein he is immersed, even as he is aware of himself, is the perfection of man's being which I look for. Yes, being perfectly aware of himself, man will be also aware of the immense universal Crowd possessing him, and possessing in its unity all being; aware also that everything that works in being is the grand Crowd's expressed desire working through its members. Already there have been evident signs of this; for just as in a human Crowd there is commonly one man who is the Crowd's main instrument of expression, who is used by the Crowd almost as man's own consciousness

uses his reason; so there have been persons—poets, prophets, musicians—to whom the universal Crowd has directly and authentically communicated itself, who have received immediately messages of the emotion wherein the stars move. These are but forerunners. When man knows that he is altogether owned by the single conscious immensity of being which dwells embodied in the whole creation, like, in small, the being of a crowd in a city's throng, the incredible vast being which man himself assists to be; and when he knows that everything which moves in him has also moved through the depths and the heights of the whole splendour of existence, for the divine desire of the universal consciousness has universally uttered it; and when he also knows the wonder of his own perfectly personal being included in the midst of the perfect person of whole created nature; then will man have come to the supreme ease of an exulting trust in the manner of his living.

CROWD.

So that, in the end, man will acknowledge the supremacy over him of the Crowd-like nature?

EARTH.

In the sense which I have suggested, yes, I believe he will; but only by coming into the supremacy of consciousness within his own being, which is still far, and very far, from perfectly conscious.

CROWD.

Then I die somewhat consoled.

EARTH.

Consoled or not, you must die; and it is time. Pass now; and easy be your passing!

V

LUST AND LOVE

LUST AND LOVE

(SCENE: THE MIND OF MAN IN SLEEP)

LUST.

Well, he is asleep at last, and the house is quiet; we can talk together now, amicably and at ease, instead of trying to thrust our tired voices into man's attention through the hubbub of counsellors that surrounds it. What a noisy parliament man does make of his waking hours! The babbling of these upstart motives, the Prudent Party, the Practicals, the talkers of ways and means, so fills his brain with din, that he has scarce any hearing for serious advisers like you and me, who would have him concerned not so much with making a living as with making a life for himself.

LOVE.

Yes; and the worst of it is, that when he is awake, man will have everyone in his parliament taking sides. He would never listen to my policy unless he was convinced of my personal bitter opposition to you, for instance. If he suspected any private friendship between us, he would at once conclude our policies to be mere dishonest ingenuities, and turn away from them. I wish we could join the forces of our persuasion together for a season, just so far as to

enable our combined strength to break down the prevailing activity of the Reasonables, with their mean debating anxieties, their insignificant prudences, and their pitiful little exaltations. But that done, there would, of course, have to be an end to our alliance; we should have to match policy against policy, and man must needs choose one or other of us. And when the division came, it would be much more in earnest than the postures of enmity we assume in the parliament as it is at present. But there seems no chance of any such alliance for us; at the first open sign of it, man would cry out on us for a couple of cozening humbugs, and have no more to do with us. Yet how can I help feeling a little friendly to you, apart from our relationship, when I must clearly perceive that there is the same opposition to the domineering of both of us, the clamouring opposition of the Prudent Motives?

LUST.

Suppose we use the pleasant quietude of this sleep for discussing how far we really could go together, in case some combination of our energies should ever become possible.

LOVE.

With all my heart. I always find it inspiriting to have some talk with you; and it is due, I dare say, to the fact that, being so closely related, we can debate our sharpest differences without anger, yet without yielding a jot of our notions.

LUST.

You know I sometimes feel rather hurt at the airs of contempt you assume to me, when man is awake and his parliament sitting; especially as you come so pleasantly to me in the intervals and praise my conversation.

LOVE.

But, dear cousin, it is not that I want to hurt you; that is not my nature at all. Deception, however, is easy to me; and man is so delightfully easy to deceive! Besides, what other behaviour could I assume? for I have already explained how man's one test of honesty is the taking of sides; and above everything I must keep my reputation for honesty with man; else I might as well retire from public life and engage myself entirely in speculation.

LUST.

Still, all this elaborate assumption of enmity, however it convinces him of your honesty, does not seem to advance your cause with man much before mine; and yet I do not trouble greatly to announce myself your enemy. I simply ignore you, and persuade man: in spite of the Practicals, with tolerable success. You would do much better, I think, to give up the extreme of your policy (whatever it may be—I do not profess to understand it) and join me as an ally with slightly modified opinions.

LOVE.

Now you mistake my private friendship as gravely as my publicly professed enmity. I acknowledge your cousinship when we are together, and am willing to have kindly discourse with you. But as for having anything to do with you in the policy I have to recommend to man, that is utterly beyond any discussion,—except, as I have already said, for the short distance we may go together in attacking the common opposition.

LUST.

And pray what is that distance ?

LOVE.

It can be simply indicated. We are both of opinion that the forces of eternity have not come together in man merely in order that he may juggle with pieces of cash. We both think that he may be more splendidly concerned with life than in that fashion. Indeed, we think that to be alive does no great good to man unless he can achieve moments of astonishing and rousing perception of the fact that he *is* alive. Now evidently the substance of life which man inhabits allows him, as it allows all its other inhabitants, one pre-eminent opportunity of feeling himself astonishingly alive ; namely, when he avails himself of the substance's power to increase itself. One may say, in truth, that when life is perfectly and intensely feeling itself to be life, it is so because it is then life

increasing itself, though not necessarily in the primitive manner. Thus far we go together; but no farther. For the increase of life begins in its substance, but, as I have just hinted, can go beyond substance.

LUST.

There is nothing beyond substance.

LOVE.

Is there not? Is there not activity? And I to "life increasing itself" would give a spiritual meaning as well as a substantial; whereas you earnestly and scrupulously engage yourself with the simple substantial meaning that applies to all other life.

LUST.

There is the echo of an old taunt in that. You would say, I suppose, that I am for persuading man to use this great opportunity of life's powers exactly as the beasts use it?

LOVE.

Since you put it that way,—yes.

LUST.

Your pleasure in cheating seems here to have so seized on you, that you are pleased to cheat yourself; you could not else be so stupefied. The bestial enjoyment of reproductive instinct is no more to be compared with me than with you.

LOVE.

So ? My dear cousin, you are putting a high value on yourself.

LUST.

I am a realist, not an idealist. I know my own worth, and I know the worth of that pretension we politely call idealism : it is no more than a coloured confession of inability to answer reality.

LOVE.

You do not disturb my temper. But—pardon my further stupidity—what is the difference between you and the rut of a beast ?

LUST.

The huge difference between obeying instinct and making instinct obey you.

LOVE.

Yet when man is persuaded by your importunity, he really seems to be very powerfully mastered by the instinct you have so urgently recommended.

LUST.

We must distinguish. When I say that man, through me, makes instinct obey him, I mean he makes it obedient to his conscious and deliberate pleasure ; which is a state of affairs utterly different from anything that happens among the beasts. I

have given him mastery over that which so tyrannizes the beasts, that they may not use it for themselves, but only for the distant ends that the instinct aims at; indeed, they do not use it at all: it uses them. But man has, with my help, found out how to use it, and entirely for his own pleasure; so to use it, moreover, whenever he wishes. And in his gratitude man has often made a god of me. Those many gods which the Practicals in man's parliament, with insolent foolishness, call gods of fertility and of multiplication, are simply my power imagined into deity. Man from the first perceived that the wildest pleasure in his existence was sexual; and so we find that in his earliest portrayal of himself, the parts which seem to him most important are the sexual parts. From this it is a small step in growing consciousness to make a deity of his pleasure in coition; the whole point of the deification being, that it is not the fertility, but merely this intolerable pleasure itself, which is put forth of him in an imagination, as if he would rid himself of responsibility for such formidable delight: the multiplication that ensues from the pleasure is, for the deity, and for the man who deifies, an accidental consequence. And in a sense he does rid himself of responsibility for the delight. For it is true that man may be mightily dominated by his deified conscious pleasure in the instinct: the god seems to rule him jealously from without. But that is quite another matter from the bestial servitude to the instinct. And by leading him under this domination, I notably

benefit him ; for I make him a creature able splendidly to make the most of the actual opportunities for intense vitality afforded by the substance of his life. This is realism of the highest nature. But what you and your idealism are after, I can never quite make out ; except that it is the old story, *the fear of life ;* the story so wearisomely told, over and over again, by Love and Religion. Man idealized by Love is nothing else than man afraid of intense vitality ; that is to say, he is man cautiously using the reproductive instinct under the control of a masterful timidity, which you impudently call a concern for his spiritual health.

LOVE.

Why " impudently " ?

LUST.

Why ? Because there is no such thing as spirit ; it is merely an arbitrary imposition of fantasy, a mendacious tampering with experience. A man is simply a man ; to say that he is flesh and spirit is not only to say something unsupported and unwarranted by any experience whatever, but even something directly contradicted by experience. No man was ever able to say, So much of my activity is spirit, and so much is flesh ; he can only say, The whole of my activity is the activity of human nature. And if he says anything else, he is but giving play to his most dangerous faculty, the incurable faculty of systematization, the faculty which produces idealism. Since man cannot

even perfectly distinguish mind from body, he is still less able to distinguish mind from spirit; and I see not why mind should not be given a chief place in the system. Why, indeed, if we are to have this meaningless systematization merely for the pleasure of puzzling at it, should we stick at flesh and spirit? Many do not; they add another equally meaningless category, —"soul"; so we have the assertion that man is flesh and spirit and soul. Why not go on? Why not flesh and mind and spirit and soul? Why not flesh and instinct and mind and spirit and soul?—Indeed, I cannot see where the business should stop at all.

LOVE.

I assure you I am not in the least interested in all this. If man does so amuse himself, it is plain he has not properly understood *me*. I know as well as you can, that man's nature is one throughout the whole of his being: it is simply the single continuous nature of man; and nothing else.

LUST.

And yet you talk of spirit!

LOVE.

And rightly. But I do not mean by that word to mark a separate ingredient in man, but rather a state of his consciousness, a state which I am specially concerned to promote and serve.—You have already admitted that man, under your persuasion, is man

mastered by the conscious desire for certain pleasures.

LUST.

It is the great blessing I give to him : I turn him from a creature worthlessly drifting among shadows and unperceived purposes into a delighted being beneficently governed and urged right onward by a craving which he is endlessly able to satisfy. I possess him with a purpose of pleasure.

LOVE.

Possibly that is better than anything the Practicals have to offer. But the possession is the point. Man is anyhow possessed,—by the destiny of the things out of which he was made. All you can do, is to add a sort of feverish pleasure to man's consciousness of his possession.

LUST.

Yes ; for that is realism.

LOVE.

It is no more realism than my way. Yours is only the slave's delight in submission,—in submission to reality ; my way is to turn man, if not into a conquest of reality, at least into a contest with it.

LUST.

But, God help you, is not man himself reality ?

LOVE.

And that is the hinge of the whole matter. He *is* reality; but he is the forces of reality made so able that they can act upon themselves. By the fact that he is individual man, he is reality capable of standing up against reality,—I do not mean in action so much as in consciousness. It is this power in him with which I am mainly concerned; this is the liberation of man, in which I am a chief helper.

LUST.

I should be glad to learn how the liberation of man may be a notion compatible with realism.

LOVE.

It is not only compatible; it is what you ignorantly claimed for your own policy,—the highest realism; for it is the attainment of the extremest possibility of existence which reality has to offer.

LUST.

I must laugh at this. So we are to find that, after all, realism and idealism not only form a single creature, as it were, but that it is a creature which lives by biting its own tail, and so always ends in itself, like the serpent of eternity?

LOVE.

I hardly think it is biting its own tail; rather it is standing upright, in an infinite upward line.

LUST.

Infinite? So your realism has no end?

LOVE.

No: because its end is God.

LUST.

There you go again!—Let me understand you, if that be at all possible. You mean, that if man will accept this strange (and strained) realism of yours, it will take him up to God.

LOVE.

Not continuously, but certainly for a moment, if he will but climb as far as I am anxious to help him; though, to be sure, he is commonly too dizzy to climb any higher, long before he has come to the end of my assistance.

LUST.

But I suppose that, since your policy is realism, man is to perceive God *in* his own reality, not beyond it?

LOVE.

Certainly not. No attempts to transcend reality have any entertainment for me, nor for anyone who delights in me.

LUST.

Do you not see that all this about God is simply the folly of flesh and spirit over again? Man's reality is the world; and this experience of his, the

world, if we look at it honestly, gives no warrant whatever for dividing it into two principles, God and something else; it is indeed utterly opposed to such a notion, which is as strictly fantastic and dishonest as the corresponding notion that man is flesh and spirit. It is worse. For if God is at all, He is interminable; whereas the world is certainly finite. And man is to find the interminable contained in the finite? The absurdity is intolerable.—And if you will say, he is to see only a part of the interminable, so much of it as the finite can hold, I answer, How can the interminable have a part?

LOVE.

And yet why be so downright that God is interminable, infinite? For certainly, infinity may be no more than a human assumption. But, after all, what is the world?—You say, man's experience. That means, there is that which experiences as well as that which is experienced. What real effect need the nature of the former have on that of the latter? Surely, none. And what hinders us from saying, man's world is his limited experience of something which, for all we know, *may* be absolutely unlimited? As far as we can see, we might say with perfect justice, that man's world is the effect God has on his carnal senses and wits.

LUST.

Even so, how is man to perceive God without getting out of his experience, without transcending

reality, *without ceasing to be man?* Moreover, the world must include man's nature; and according to you, that which experiences in man must stand outside God, because God is to be experienced. But you will have the world to be not only the world, but also God. Then where does man come in? The world, as world, claims him; the world as God must reject him. This is that old nonsense, pantheism. If things are God, then man, perceiving things, cannot be God, who is the perceived; and not being God, he cannot be a thing,—he is nothing. So it is with your policy: man, it seems, must be in the world, and yet out of it.

LOVE.

And that, by virtue of spirit, is just what he is.

LUST.

So, after all, you do take spirit as an ingredient? Man's flesh is in the world, his spirit is out of it: is that it? And if his spirit is outside the world, is it also outside God?

LOVE.

But I am using the word God in a manner precisely similar to my use of the word spirit.—Remember, I am merely dealing with *man's* reality; obviously, this is the only conceivable kind of realism for man as well as for us, who are man's persuasions. It may be, that what is reality for man would not be reality outside him; but with that we cannot be concerned. Now in man's reality I perceive two things; and I

perceive that these are the two things which are of the highest importance to him if he is to make the most of life, of his reality. And these two things are, —spirit, and God. By spirit I mean, as I have said, a state of his consciousness; and I mean by God a state of his spirit's commerce with what surrounds it.

LUST.

And spirit, you say, though not an ingredient, is a thing which enables man to be not of the world while yet he is of it?

LOVE.

Well, but even in your view, it is necessary to admit something of the kind. Man is made of the world; but also he perceives the world; therefore, in so far as he perceives the world, he is not of it.

LUST.

I should have to admit that, if I admitted also in man some fixt central principle which perceives and knows itself positively as a perceiving thing; in fact, if I admitted in man a personal identity. But I admit no such thing. What man ever really perceived himself? He never does anything more than be aware of his perceiving of things, whether within him or without, which are certainly not his *Self*.

LOVE.

Yet man is quite determined of his own personal identity.

LUST.

He is ; but it is a delusion. He is merely an organism with the power of reacting in his brain to the stimulus of things outside and inside ; the reaction is thought. And the false sense of identity is simply due to this, that these reactions follow one another so rapidly that they seem to be continuous. He feels this apparent continuity of reaction ; hence, he feels an apparent identity in that which reacts. And he calls this delusion his Self.

LOVE.

For ordinary states of consciousness this is, in a manner, true ; though to analyse a delusion is not to say that it is not in itself a part of man's reality. But I rather attend to certain extraordinary states, in which there is no doubt that man is genuinely aware of himself. Philosophy, when debating whether man can really know himself or not, is apt to attend only to man as he usually is ; and then she does not go far wrong in asserting that man does not properly know himself. But there are these other states, which she ignores ; which, however, I prefer chiefly to consider. They vary in vividness and intensity ; but perhaps you will take my intention when I say that, at their vividest and intensest, they achieve the state called ecstasy. But, though true self-consciousness is in ecstasy altogether free and unencumbered, the power which can be so triumphant in man is implicit even

in man's ordinary and hardly conscious states of being.

LUST.

Is this power something which may be called a fixt and central identity in man ?

LOVE.

I am not sure whether it may ; but certainly it is that whereby man's ordinary states of being are constantly aware of their perceptions, and his extra-ordinary states are further aware of perceiving that which perceives.

LUST.

Then it must be something central, abiding within the ceaseless whirling continuity of thought, which, I say, alone gives man his delusion of a positive self.

LOVE.

It certainly is, as it were, *behind* the flux of man's thought.

LUST.

And I deny there is anything behind it. There is only the delusion of self caused by the apparent continuity of experience.

LOVE.

But how has man the feeling of continuity, unless he has some means of assuming relations in his experience ?

LUST.

Why, he simply imagines the relations, and the appearance of continuity follows.

LOVE.

And that is the very word I want from you. Yes, man's sense of unity in his experience, therefore of a central unity in himself, is the work of his imagination. This, then, is the power abiding deep within, and working outward through, the unceasing change of his thought, of his experience. Imagination is the inmost reality of man.

LUST.

Truly, this is a new sort of realism; a realism built on the flimsy clouds of imagination!

LOVE.

But you have admitted that it is imagination which allows man to feel himself a constant person; and this feeling (whatever philosophy may make of personality itself) is a very sturdy thing, so sturdy that it has been held to be the one thing man can positively know of himself. So that we have here something firm built on the principle of imagination, which cannot therefore be such a very uncertain foundation.

LUST.

Then that which is *person* in man receives everything through imagination ?

LOVE.

Certainly. Imagination is not only the power which makes fantasies out of experience : its ultimate power lies much deeper than that ; it is indeed the power whereby sensation becomes human experience.

LUST.

And what about man's will ? Is the sense of that, too, the work of imagination ?

LOVE.

In so far as man thinks himself a conscious choosing will, it is of course the work of imagination. The thing, however, is, that *the Will itself is imagination.* The immense energies of existence have met together in man to become not only Will, but Imaginative Will. They have made him not only an individual in the midst of themselves, but even an individual that turns them into his own special experience, receives them and creates therefrom within himself his own world. After fashioning, by concentrating and opposing themselves, the discrete particle, or globe of system, which is man, the resultant of these energies, the combined force which is left over after the system is made firm, is man's will ; and by some means which

we cannot even examine, the will has become imaginative. That is to say, the outer events which fall in upon man, the news of that which surrounds him, are received by his will, and by it *imagined*, cast into form: *To efform sensation, to imagine it into a shape which is man's own experience*—that is the prime original operation of his will. The imaginative will is the final governance of man: behind this man cannot get; which, however, is a very different thing from saying there is nothing behind it. I mean only, that of *man's* reality, of all that makes him man, this imaginative will is the beginning. And it is because the will is imaginative, that it is conscious: that it makes of the surges and impulses of the outer affairs which strike upon it, a continuous, related, formal series of experiences; and hence, that it makes of the man whom it wields a constant personality. But this imaginative will varies in the intensity of its power. Ordinarily, it is but conscious of what it causes, of experience. Yet there are times when it achieves such astonishing vigour, that it even becomes aware of itself, conscious that it is the cause of experience. This is man become self-conscious: this is what I call spirit in man. This central power in man stands up, as it were, amid its own work, and feels less the work than itself the worker. It is amazed into a keen, an exulting perception that itself is that which perceives. And it was primitive, vague knowledge of this unusual sort of consciousness which prompted man's systematizing mind to suppose

spirit as a definite separable element in his nature. But though the possibility of spirit is always implicit in man, it does not of itself, nor by chance, become an actuality in him ; to become so is the method of the will's reaction to the impulses of certain notable events ; chief among which am I, Love. And I am the chief because it is I who can excite spirit in man to its utmost vehemence. This is why I hold myself of such worth to man ; I am the persuasion which can make man most perfectly man. The tendency of existence is towards exultation ; man, like everything else, is an experiment of this tendency. I justify the experiment : I make it splendidly successful. For by capturing the instinct whereby life increases itself, which is the wonderfullest opportunity life has for intensity of living, I have drawn the utmost astonishment out of the opportunity offered ; not by multiplying its pleasant use, as is your way, but by profoundly changing it to a perilous and irresistible marvel, able to possess and penetrate the whole activity of man. I have made it at last an instinct for spiritual increase ; and spiritual increase means, man's liberation from the world, man grown to perfect manhood. For by his mere existence man is a discrete kind within the world ; but he is still *of* the world. When, however, I work on him, by rousing his imaginative will to extremest vigour, exciting it into the delighted self-awareness which is spirit, I make him somewhat which, though held by the world, is not of the world : that which perceives the world pouring in on it, and

also perceives itself accepting and, in efforming it, striving with this streaming income of world, is by this very self-consciousness certainly made somewhat which is not the world. Spirit is man free of the world, free enough, at least, to be aware of himself, of his conscious imaginative will, opposed and dictating to the world surging against him. Man thus is perfectly man. And yet this is not the end of my persuasion. I can urge, though but for sudden exalted moments, and those moments exceeding rare in the human generations, I can urge man to become more than man; I can give him the final ecstasy of conscious perception, which is God. I speak here, as always, only of man's reality; what, outside of that, there may be, which we could call God, I am not concerned to know. But within man's reality, this is what I mean. I, having prompted man to be truly aware of himself, to achieve spirit, have therefore made him conscious of the battle between his spirit and the world. And the manner of the contest is, in a convenient way of speaking, this: his spirit stands where he will be attacked by the world; he must accept this perpetual onslaught, because, though really its career has nothing to do with him, certainly no purpose against him, he is so placed that the onward rushing of the world *must* attack him. In this contest, the vigorous triumphant defence of the spirit, of man's conscious imaginative will, is his power of forming this chance-medley of attack into *his own experience;* whereby he maintains and exalts his continued con-

sciousness. Man liberated from the world into spirit must by that very fact be exposed to the world's onslaught, for he must stand amidst it ; but he prevails in defending himself,—indeed, he turns the attack into the service of his profoundest need, which is to create his own experience. Still, so far, it is he who is attacked. But when I see a man favourable to my purposes, a spirit wonderfully delighting to experience the siege of the world, meeting the attack with a mighty and a gleeful imagination,—I can rouse him to a greater height even than this bravery. I make myself the captain of the besieging muster, and by tireless and strange assaults I stir the imagination of his spirit to the highest height of exultation in the beautiful joy of contest ; until, on a sudden, there comes upon him the uttermost state of self-awareness. The siege has ended ; the contest changes amazingly. The upright imagination of his will has grown to such self-knowing strength and stature that, so far from being attacked, it becomes the domineering conqueror of the forces of the world. In plain words, his experience is turned from being a world pouring in upon his imagination, and becomes a world which is his own spirit's liberated utterance. It has no longer the world for its condition, as a flame has air ; itself becomes the condition of the world. Instead of accepting the world into his imagining will, it is now the world that accepts in the whole of its nature his own enlarged imaginative desire. Instead of needing to stand up against the flooding destiny,

he is gone so high that destiny pours out of himself, striking through the surrounding submissive world in vast radiations. He has caught up the world into his own consciousness, making it a part of his own will. He has known God; he has reached into the utter unity of existence, and has felt it as himself. The world and man were at first a single being: man was possessed by the world. Then spirit arose in man, and what was single became twain,—two natures in contest, besieger and besieged. But the end of this is unity again; not by man again becoming the world's possession, but by himself possessing the world, in the supreme of impassioned consciousness. This is the furthest towering of the imagination of man's spirit; and only I can prompt it. It has been but a moment; but a moment was enough; in it man has justified the reality of his existence to himself.— But it is necessary here that I should add something very remarkable to my argument; hitherto I have left it out, in order that I might put my intention for man in a way so simple that you could not avoid understanding it. But the whole truth of the matter is not simple; indeed the simplicity of my statement would by itself be a notable falsehood. For I have been using the word "man" in a quite general sense, to mean as well woman as man. The consequence is, that I have appeared to speak of myself as if I were a detacht phantom beneficently attacking, in my own proper and peculiar being, some individual human nature; and in that individual exciting the state I

have been describing: he would then be alone in possession of such a state. But, of course, this is not so; I can only work on humanity through humanity. A man to a woman, or a woman to a man, must be my medium; since my original power is placed in the primitive instinct whereby life increases itself. Herein lies the difficulty of the matter. For, you see, by means of my profoundly modified excitement of that primitive sexual instinct, I cause a person's imaginative will to fashion an astonishingly vehement and shining experience out of the impression given by another person, who thereby becomes the beloved; and, in fact, the beloved appears invested with many marvellous qualities. So these qualities must truly be said to be the property not of the beloved but of the lover; the marvellous investment of the beloved is a creative act of the lover's will, which has possessed itself of me, of the primitive instinct in life changed to Love. Seems it then not likely, this being the nature of that flaming experience, that always the lover must go by himself, or by herself, into that exaltation I have described?—the beloved, if there at all with the lover, being there only as the lover's experience, as his own or her own accompanying creation, as the continued utterance of his or her will? Yet, believe me, this is utterly removed from what does and what must occur; on the contrary, not by any means may the lover be alone in that state of exaltation, but, if there at all, always accompanied by the beloved,—by the beloved as an actual person, not simply as the

lover's self-created experience. It is such a passion, that the common easing of experience is burnt away; what the lover knows of the beloved flies off from him or from her, and the spirits of lover and beloved are left nakedly touching one another; and this is a state as far above *knowledge* as life is above death. Not easy to tell how this is so; but, shortly to attempt it, I must first say what I am myself: how the primitive increasing instinct of life was changed into my nature. And here again we must find the work of that original and originating virtue in man, his imaginative will. For I am myself nothing else than the sexual instinct efformed by the human will into which it has fallen; I am that rough instinct imagined by man's central formative power into shaped desires. The desire existed potentially in man's will alone; the instinct, falling upon it, is the material whereby and wherein the desire is shapen. And the desire is to absorb, and be absorbed in, something admirable; namely, it is the desire of consciousness to transcend itself; to transcend both its boundaries and its knowledge of itself; to unite itself indeed with that which ordinarily can be but its own experience; to pass beyond its creative power, and not merely to know, but to *be* that which it knows. The sexual ravishment of life becomes a desire to transgress the primary condition of life, which is imaginative, and to become *the truth*, namely, that on which the volition of man's imagination operates, that which in its proper nature is warded off from man by his perpetually creative

will. This *warding-off* is man's "knowing,"—an act of his will against externality; therefore the desire is, to transeend "knowing." You will have perceived that the final satisfaction of this desire is that which I have called God: for man cannot know God; but he can, aeeording to the strength of this desire, in sudden towering moments *be* God: the phrase, as I use it, is not a mere bold insolence. But this final satisfaetion must be arrived at mediately; and for it, it is altogether necessary that each beloved lover shall become to the other not an imagined experience, but a positive existence; each, namely, shall *become* (sinee it is not possible to know) the *truth* of the other. As they commonly put it, the two become one; and certainly, in these momentary exaltations, they do transgress, the one into the other, the conditions of individual existence. All this is hard to say; but doubtless you will not require me to say more.—Now, my cousin, it is your turn; let me see what you have to put beside this. For it seems to me that you can only exist when the sexual instinet meets with a will of very feeble formative power; and you must therefore be an infinitely less signifieant experienee than I am.—But I pereeive man is waking; we must put off our debate.

LUST.

Man is rousing is he? But as for me, I was on the edge of falling asleep. I have not understood a word of what you have been saying latterly; and what's

more, I don't believe you have understood much yourself.

LOVE.

That remark of yours is a strong confirmation of everything I have been saying.

. . . . . .

MAN.

(*Waking up.*)

Only three and a half per cent? No, no: that's not good enough.

VI
SCIENCE AND THE WORLD

WORLD.

Busy man! Always at it!

SCIENCE.

Ah! welcome, welcome, my friend and master.

WORLD.

No, no; your friend I hope I am, but not your master, surely.

SCIENCE.

Not my master? It is, I suppose, the truth, that the passion of my life can do you no considerable good; would I might find some means of putting myself at your service! But it is a passion, nevertheless, which I devote altogether to worshipping you, and declaring your splendour. In that sense, surely you are my master.

WORLD.

Well, well. So long as you think you are doing this, no doubt you may be said to be doing it.

SCIENCE.

You are in some strange mood to-day. How have I annoyed you?

World.

Who talks of being annoyed? I was only wondering how long you mean to keep yourself so humble.

Science.

Before you I am humble, and always mean to be: but it is a humility so impassioned, that I seem higher in it than I could ever be in pride.

World.

Very commendable sentiments; but it is in the object of these sentiments that you appear to be mistaken.—Ah, my touchy friend, now you look put out; but not so seriously, I hope, as to mind me looking in on you a little?

Science.

You well know, I can never have too much to do with you,—no, and never enough, however you may use me. But what you said just now was rather sharp to me, I admit. And if you want to make amends, do, for once, leave off that absurd rule of yours, and come in comfortably through the door. Why must you always be so strict, to talk with me only through the window? It looks as if you did not trust yourself with me; and it is time, surely, to have done with all that. Are we not perfectly friends? So please come right in, and sit you down, and let us be easy. It is not easy for me, and cannot be for you either, I should guess, always to be having a wall between us when

you are for a talk with me, you merely poking the top of your body through a window at me.

WORLD.

It is not to be managed. I can never contrive to get through your door, much as your conversation delights me. I must always be outside. And indeed it seems well enough as it is. Anyhow, we must make the best we can of this posture, for nothing else will serve—you sitting in your study, and I looking in on you through the window.

SCIENCE.

The truth is, I must put up with anything from you, my World.

WORLD.

"My World," you say?

SCIENCE.

A mere form of words; nothing meant but affection.

WORLD.

So I feared; yet what affection means need not be despised by the rest of you. To be sure, just now, and whenever we talk thus face to face, in the brief encounters that are permitted to us, I am scarcely to be called *your* world. The nakedness of our natures seems to communicate in a way that leaves each of us (it is very much of a rarity in communication) entirely *self-possessed:* that swift and subtle demon,

Persuasion, has not presided over our meeting, to effect our mutual contamination. And for that to remain possible as far as I am concerned—and for you too, I think,—it is necessary that I should—stay outside! But afterwards, when our meeting is over,—do you not turn me into something that is very really *yours?* And it is then that I come into your room,—when I myself have left you!—What were you at, before I arrived just now?

SCIENCE.

Why, working up my notes of our last conversation, analyzing, synthesizing, multiplying, generalizing, abstracting, classifying, indexing, and so on. Very busy I was.

WORLD.

I am sure of it. And in the result, what, may I ask, were you making of me?

SCIENCE.

A pleasant question! What was I making of you? Why, the only thing my nature will suffer me to make of you; and that is, what you are in very truth. Or, at least, the precise manner of your being what you are.

WORLD.

Not the precise manner of my seeming to you?

SCIENCE.

Fiddle! I can do better than that, I hope.

WORLD.

Idealist!

SCIENCE.

Idealist! But it is to Science you are speaking.

WORLD.

Yes. To Science, the subtlest of the idealists.

SCIENCE.

Let me understand this accusation.

WORLD.

It is hardly an accusation. I am merely hoping to set our friendship on a steady ground.

SCIENCE.

A charge of idealism is a likely foundation for friendship! But is it in the vulgar, or the strict sense, that you would make me out an idealist?

WORLD.

The two senses, in your case at any rate, are not greatly apart. Surely you are the idealist of common speech, in that you confidently propose to yourself the possibility of some perfect attainment—of making out, namely, the precise manner of my being.

SCIENCE.

Well, I will consent to that. There is always some

suggestion of amiable folly in idealism, whether vulgar or philosophical; but the folly of my idealism, as you assert it, if it can be called folly, is not only amiable, but noble, which I suppose I may easily tolerate in myself.

WORLD.

That is what everyone says of his particular brand of vulgar idealism. I suppose it really means this, that since everyone knows he must be a fool one way or another, it is as well to contrive some way of being a fool proudly; a disability which should humiliate becomes then something to strut about. But please remember that it was you, not I, who first brought in the word folly.

SCIENCE.

Which does not seem to disagree with your mind on the matter. However, now I should like to know my idealism in the philosophical sense, which implies, I understand, a belief in the real existence of archetypes and things of that sort.

WORLD.

This is not so easy as the other. Tell me, though, if I am right in taking your method of work to be a mutually dependent use of your reason and your sensuous experience.

SCIENCE.

Any child knows that is my way.

World.

Reason correcting, arranging, and otherwise dealing with sensuous experience ?

Science.

Quite right ; go on.

World.

But keeping close to sensuous experience all the time ?

Science.

I should put it this way : using sensuous experience, and nothing else, as my building material. Obviously, here as in any other structural work, the nature of the material is a very important condition of the whole result. But reason, after purifying and testing the material, builds it up carefully and, I may proudly say, scientifically, into an edifice of which reason, scrupulous always not to overstrain his material, is the designer.

World.

And this building is nothing less than an image of me : not a symbolic but an actual image ?

Science.

One makes mistakes. Often I have had to pull down towers of patient labour, finding that my basement would not safely bear my superstructure, or even—so scrupulous am I—simply that my upper did not tally with my lower building—the design had got out

of hand. But if all my mistakes were put right, and the last spire were finisht (and here once more I am proudly the vulgar idealist), I believe that my structure would indeed be an image of you.

WORLD.

You think a good deal of reason, then ?

SCIENCE.

Of course I do. Without I did, how else should I get on with my work ?

WORLD.

Granted that you are right to magnify your reason, it is still possible that you magnify it into something questionable.

SCIENCE.

I do not magnify it into anything ; I accept it as the divine thing it is.

WORLD.

What it comes to is this : since your building, which reason has designed, is to be an image of me, I, the world, must be reasonable.

SCIENCE.

I suppose it does come to that.

WORLD.

Plainly ; and to this also, that reasoning does not

exist in you for the convenience and stability and forwarding of your general existence (which is man's); it rather exists as a copy—it might be imperfect, but nevertheless, certainly decipherable—of me. I, then, am the archetype of your reason; in this way you are a philosophical idealist.

SCIENCE.

What then? It displeases you?

WORLD.

Indeed, it does. I am the World; I am things that exist. And naturally, so being, I dislike idealism. I like belief in things that are, not in things that may be. Your belief in reason as reason is admirable to me; but to believe in reason because it may be a copy of its supposed archetype in me—that I call useless, and therefore unpleasant. Pray, what support can you bring to this latter belief?

SCIENCE.

A very strong one; my own implanted conviction.

WORLD.

Yes, and I do not think you will delve below that. It may do very well for you; but you must pardon me if I say, that it does very indifferently for me. Your history, if you will remember, has been but a casual and haphazard affair. I do not mean your history since you have been truly yourself, truly

Science ; that has been orderly and dignified enough. I mean the long confused obscurity of your beginnings ; of the gradual emergence of reason into man's assured station on earth out of a host of struggling competitors —horns and teeth, swiftness and hunger, shyness and daring, astonishing nice instinct, and sheer bulk of life, and all the other clients of nature. Out of this mob, reason emerged the master simply because it proved in the long run the most masterly competitor in the struggle ; and it triumphed into you, Science. But often it was obscured in such a medley of contest, that one could almost say it might easily not have emerged at all. And now, having emerged, you say it did so because it was a copy of me. Well, those other competitors, having often prest you so hard, having so nearly been successful themselves, might also thereby in some sort declare themselves copies of me ; which would make me out a very mixt sort of creature. It all may be true, of course ; I cannot tell, neither can you. But the sole cause I have for supposing your reason to be a copy of me is the fact that you pertinaciously say it is ; only prompted to that, however, by your implanted and unanalyzable conviction. Yet why prefer the " may be " to the " is " ? It would seem to me much more simple and satisfactory to say, that reason emerged triumphant just because it happened to be capable of emerging ; and that when you have perfectly accomplished the building of your experience into the design intended by your reason, you will then have achieved a perfect

image of—your own reason. I do not see why you should not be content with that.

SCIENCE.

Ah, I see where we are now. It is an old story in the mouths of my enemies; I did not expect to hear it from you. I take you to mean, that in all my honest and loving endeavours to study your genuine solid reality, I never get beyond studying the shadowy vapours of my own plausible nature. I think, considering all the endurance of passion I have spent on you, that I may call it an amazingly ungrateful speech.

WORLD.

That is the worst of idealizing. When you train yourself to believe beyond "is" into "may be," you get to despise the "is" as something not deserving serious attention. Now, I cannot see that I have said anything which, if you were not glamoured by the charm of "may be," should trouble your temper.

SCIENCE.

Practically what you have said is, that I do not, and cannot, know *you*.

WORLD.

Well, but how can you know me? How can you know, at least, the purity of my being?

SCIENCE.

So that in all my operations I am never dealing with a fixt reality ?

WORLD.

Who said you were not ? Of course you are dealing with a fixt reality ; all I suggest is, that it is yours, not mine.

SCIENCE.

Give me leave to think this a profitless fantastic splitting of a hair ; and to ask also how all this is likely to found our friendship on steady ground. I am for setting our relationship firm on your stable necessity, independent of the vagaries of personal nature ; while you, it seems, propose that I shall confess to doing nothing but build on the very thing I think chiefly to avoid, the uncertain variable sands of purely human existence.

WORLD.

Really, you make it very uncomfortable for me, taking my suggestions in this spirit of calm reproach. I hope, however, to end with a solid friendship ; but first I should like to make a clearance of some of your notions. They make the ground unsafe, and should be drained off.

SCIENCE.

And the first of these notions, apparently, is my certainty that I can get past the manner of your seeming to me and touch, though it be only lightly,

the manner of your being. You are not, let me say, properly appreciating my theory, and the fineness and hardness of the chain that fastens its deepest plummet to the mere crass uppermost commonplace of experience. I can, for example, say positively that chemical change, in spite of all appearance, does not alter the mass of the substance changed. There, I think, I get beyond seeming, and reach to you yourself. Yes, when I arrive at such conceptions as *Conservation of Matter* and *Conservation of Energy*, I am surely dealing with something more removed than your mere effect on me ; I have not simply fingered my personal experience, I have run my hand over the figure of immutable fate. The common naked sight of man, gazing at the night, sees only the countless shining of stars ; and there, if you like, is the seeming of the world. But give my sight the help of a few prisms and lenses, and I can tell you for certain that the stuff of the sun and stars is the stuff of the earth under my feet. Am I not then trading with reality, and not just with seeming ? Nay, give me pencil and paper, and I can tell you what my eyes have never seen ; I can tell you how undiscovered stars go swinging with finite movement through infinite void. And you will say that, knowing all this, it is not *you* I know ? And when I can perceive not only matter, but the same matter, and the same behaviour of matter, both here and in regions unspeakably remote, you will have me entertain the idle dream that there is no certainty of matter at all ?—And then there is

Time; yes, there's a thing for you,—Time! It is not only in myself, in my experience of living, that I know Time. I look keenly around me, and in the whole surrounding world, living and unliving, I see that this same Time I know within me has interpenetrated and formed the whole. I see that Time is, as it were, and along with space and energy, a prime ingredient of created existence. And therefore is not Time, and is not that into which Time has for ever mingled itself, a reality, not merely my own seeming? And as for me, I have Time in my own inner perception not only when I am awake and aware of you; no, but even when I am closed away from you in sleep, when you cannot be seeming to me, when I can only have my own personal seeming, I am profoundly aware of Time; as soon as I wake up, I know that Time has past through me,—if I do not know it, it has not been simply sleep: drugs or disease have had to do with it. And, looking about me, I perceive that Time has also past through the outer world that I had lost in sleep. Does not that show that not only is the outer world real, but that there is the same reality within me and without me? Therefore that which is within me can truly know that which is without.

WORLD.

But, my good friend, it is not the "reality" within you which knows the reality without; but, on the contrary, both are equally known by something which is neither. You are mixing up your being with

your consciousness of being. So for you to insist on the likeness between your inner and your outer experience does not help your argument much; may I not say that you yourself deal with both after the same fashion?

SCIENCE.

How do you mean, I deal with them?

WORLD.

Why, you form them into something appreciable; and as such, but not till they are such, you receive them into consciousness.

SCIENCE.

That applies to sensuous experience, no doubt. I cannot, of course, mind you saying, that what my senses give me is not your actuality, but rather the mode of my reacting to your actuality. But the whole point of my business is, to subject my senses' work to reason, which is impersonal.

WORLD.

No more impersonal than sense; and, at the same time, just as impersonal.

SCIENCE.

Well, anyhow, it enables me to know, for example, that what in me is sound or light or heat, is vibration in you.

WORLD.

Who told you your sound and your light and your heat are my vibrations ?

SCIENCE.

I have found it out, by the aid of conscientious reason.

WORLD.

A good phrase, "conscientious reason"; it will be some help to me in a minute or two.—Well, you may perhaps have found that out; but it seems to me, that all you have warrant for saying is this : you have found out that what is sound or light or heat in your sense is vibration in your reason.

SCIENCE.

Very well; you deny once more that I have any concern with stable necessity ? It is merely myself I am concerned with ?

WORLD.

Still that unhappy humility, that strange mistrust of your *self!* Of course you are engaged in investigating a stable necessity. All I ask is, why say it is mine ? Why be so humbly positive that your own nature is uncertain and questionable ?—When I first lookt in on you, I askt what you were making of me. You thought the question absurd; and so it was absurd, but not for the reasons you meant. It was

absurd, simply because I knew quite well what you were making of me; you were, and you were bound to be, elaborating in one way or another something of what human mind has always made of me. For there is in you a stable necessity far more comprehensive and commanding in its grasp than you reckon, I believe.

SCIENCE.

You mean the necessity of my senses and of experiencing through my senses?

WORLD.

O no, no; that is a small part of the necessity I see in you. The whole of it I should call, the necessity of your imagination.

SCIENCE.

Imagination! In me! And imagination necessitated! Yes, I think you were right in questioning my belief that you are discoverable to reason—that you are, in fact, reasonable. Indeed, if I am awake now, and you are not an impostor, I must certainly believe that the World is crazy.

WORLD.

Because I say that the central principle within your power of knowing is not a faculty for analysis and discrimination, but altogether, through and through, a creative faculty,—a stable necessity of creative faculty: indeed, an active, outward-raying vigour

of unalterable imagination ?—Well, here is something for you to explain. Do you know much of the philosophers of early Greece ?

SCIENCE.

Nothing at all, except that, as I gather, their modes of investigation were pretty contemptible.

WORLD.

Quite so ; in your view they would be. Is it not then remarkable, that these men, these early Greeks, born, we might say, before Science was in embryo, whose style of thinking differs from yours as much as thought can differ, did nevertheless, in the whole result of their labour, make out a world almost exactly the same as the world you have made out ?

SCIENCE.

What ? I don't believe it.

WORLD.

Naturally. If reason be indeed a faculty of discrimination and correction, then that these men, supplied by their ignorance, their disabilities, and their superstitious manner of understanding, with material to work on so utterly different from yours, should yet have come to your result, would certainly be unbelievable. You have only to suppose, however, as I do, that reason is a thing essentially creative—or essentially imaginative, let me rather say—and the

fact is simply what you would expect. Reason, always imaginative, and always imaginative in the same way, —the outcome of a stable central necessity of active imagination—will always produce the same result, always, broadly speaking, the same world, whatever material it has to work on; for, give it what you like to work on, it always fashions this into the image of itself. Indeed, it always *realizes* the same imagination.

SCIENCE.

You must convince me first that these savage-minded philosophers really did find out the same world as mine.

WORLD.

You can do that for yourself with a little reading of history; I have no time for it. But perhaps I put it too downright. It would, however, be entirely scrupulous to say, that for every principle you have discovered there may be found an exact counterpart among the notions they invented; and I am sure I can safely go as far as this: if I were to go choosing through the whole mass of their philosophy, I could, without needing any ingenuity or finesse, draw out and fit together just that very vision of the world which is the triumph of your labours. And this is enough for my purpose. For you cannot bring in guess-work to explain it. That might do for a few correspondences; but not for correspondence so thorough as you will find. Yet their vision of the world, remember, came from mere uncontrolled

speculation, while yours comes from patient and minutely conscientious investigation; and the two visions are substantially the same. Nay, it is not only these early Greeks that anticipated you; the whole history of human thought is one long anticipation of scientific conclusions. The figure, of course, varies; but under visions of infinitely varying figure, the same manner of accepting the world may always be found. You hold, for instance, that your doctrine of energy is something peculiarly characteristic of the way modern science thinks of the world. But look at the old doctrine of phlogiston; and there you have, in another figure, just the very thing you take pride in as something signally your own. But the doctrine of phlogiston was an attempt to explain the world by pure speculation; and your doctrine of energy is a chain to which no link was added that grave experiment had not severely tested. But let us go back to our Greeks, and take from them something which looks like nothing but hasty, uncontrolled speculation. There was a notion among them that the prime act in the creation of the world was the physical establishment of mathematical relations, or, to put the same thing more familiarly and vividly, the playing of a material tune. It is common to all ages to conceive that the apparent diverse stabilities of matter have not always been fixt and separate existences, but are various modes of being, adopted by one original, parental substance. Some, like Alchemy and yourself, have even held that these modes or elements, owing to

their common stock, can pass into each other. But leaving aside this minor instance of anticipation (you finding that Alchemy long ago said roughly what you are now trying to say exactly), the question is, how was the informal, indefinite, undimensional origin of the world converted into the formal, definite, dimensional varieties of matter? You have seen how scattered sand may be brought into a shapely pattern by the trembling of a sound. That was how the Greeks conceived the creation of the world. It was the work of a tune that swept through the immense uncreated origin of things; the steady, limited world is both the fixation of the tune into physical pattern, and the fixation in that pattern's terms of the nature of the unlimited vague. Does this seem fantastical to you? Then look at one of your diagrams declaring your Periodic Law in Chemistry. What are you shown there? Why, the elements putting themselves into a gamut of octaves; or, more remarkably, exhibiting a progression of properties which is not straightforward, but in a series of waves, regularly rising and falling, the size of each wave always increasing. What is this but to say that the series of elements is the fixation of some incomprehensible music which beat once through the unconditioned ether; that your world consists of six complete pulsations of creative rhythm, which thus realized itself in physical symbols? Your journey to this result has gone a long way round about; but you could not miss the way in the end. Equivalents and combining weights, atoms and atomic

weights, arrangement in accordance with atomic weight and thereby arrangement in accordance with chemical and physical properties: after all this long labour of investigation and theory you find yourself—by the side of Pythagoras! And Mendeléeff's famous table serves to illustrate a verse by Dryden.—Do you think I mean to humiliate you? You look as if that were your thought just now.

SCIENCE.

I take it that, in some unaccountable way, you have come to dislike me; and, in order to know how you may most unjustly insult me, you have, it seems, consulted that wanton jade Metaphysics. The only opinion I have on the matter is this: that it is a strange way of consulting your own dignity.

WORLD.

I think better of Metaphysics than you do; but there is no need to consult her for things that are unmistakable. And as for insulting you, I certainly am not at one with those vulgar heads that, as I lately note, are to be found going about among men talking in small disparagement of you. But, by some unwisdom in your opinion of yourself, you have certainly given these slight tongues something to brabble over; and it is in the way, too, of our real friendship, for it gives you a wrong explanation of my high regard for you, which I hope in the end to make clear. And for this I would urge you again to discard your belief that I

am in any way the model from which you draw your splendid and exhilarating conclusions; but, on the contrary, to regard these as the unfolding of your own nature, an act in which I am concerned merely as a stimulus: the influx of me into you rousing the inmost core of your nature to send an impulse working outwards to the last bounds of your being—the whole result of science nothing but a stimulated expression of human nature. I am the mere vehicle in which this expression contains itself. To go back to my image of sound and sand, and give it a different use, I am the shapeless scattering of sand; but the impulse out of your central activity of imagination is the sound that strikes through the susceptible sand and shivers it into a pattern; and this "world" of sand *plus* pattern exists nowhere but in the scope of man's knowledge of his own being, and exists only for that knowledge. Scientific discoveries, like tragedies and symphonies, proceed in you from within outwards. The business of man's mind is to make the world speak acceptable things to his nature; and the ceaseless activity of imagination, wherewith he manages, in so many various ways, to form the world into something desirable to his central spirit, remains always profoundly the same. The patterns of his "world" differ only like the dialects of one language. The style of greeting that was acceptable of old is the acceptable style to-day, a message unacceptable then is still unacceptable; and man decides on the truth of your conclusions, Science, by deciding whether he

likes them or not: that is, whether they shape in accordance with the inherent formality of his deep desires. So, for instance, it has always been man's need to understand the world in some rhythmic manner. What art has done for this need I will not discuss; but as for you, you bring rhythm into everything. You have already admitted what it has done for your conceptions of heat, light, sound. And now what man requires is rhythmic creation and rhythmic stability for things; nothing else will satisfy him, and you are bound to supply him with what he wants. And so you, Science, just as the ancient speculative philosophers did before you, are busily preparing for man some rhythmic vision of material creation and stability. The Periodic Law in Chemistry is only the start of it; that began by giving to matter an atomic structure, and now that electricity too has an atomic structure, the business will assuredly go forward still further. You may be quite easy beforehand about the truth of your rhythmic world; it will be true enough for man, because he will certainly like it.

SCIENCE.

And still I am not to take all this as your contempt for me! Why, it simply reduces my whole work to a sort of blind chance-medley.

WORLD.

Again! Will you never have done with despising yourself? I tell you that the world you investigate

is as certainly necessitated as you yourself believe it to be; what is there so troublesome in adding to my assurance the caution, that your world is necessitated only by your own nature?

SCIENCE.

It is too silly. This whole majestic process of causation which I call the world, is nothing but my own self-expression? The accumulated evidence of science——

WORLD.

Is accumulated evidence that all men's natures, conscientiously explored, turn out on the whole to be similar to one another.

SCIENCE.

My knowledge that what may happen in my laboratory happens also in the sun and the stars! That a chemical change once observed has been observed for always! That the mathematical forces of an organism of stars too vast to be perceived, do but form a model in large of the forces in an atom too tiny to be perceived! In short, my reasoned conviction of the immeasurable unity of the world! What do you make of this in your preposterous version of my business?

WORLD.

Your reasoned conviction, you say; yes, but that is a conviction reasoned from a conviction that already exists in you, the conviction of your desires. So what

should I make of all this, but that the unity in your world is your own unity,—rather your own requirement of unity? And all those other things you speak of: they too are your own desires realized and put forth of you.

SCIENCE.

So then I am no better than those lunatic poetic speculators of old Greece?

WORLD.

Ah, that I never said. Reason certainly has improved since the days of those heroic players of man's endless game of thinking; and you are its improvement. That is why, though your vision of the world is certainly contained in theirs, yet in order to get yours out of theirs, one would have to do a lot of choosing and rejecting.

SCIENCE.

But I understood you to say that the vision is always the same: so that reason, which you make responsible for the vision, must also be always the same.

WORLD.

A vision may be the same substantially, and yet may differ in clearness and hardness of main outline and in propriety of detail. And I never said that *reason* is always the same. You do not need me to tell you, that reason in all its working for ever relies on something which is not reason, something underneath it and supporting it—something, in fact, *a*

priori. It is this something, this implanted conviction from which all reasoning proceeds, that is the unalterable thing in human nature. And what is the manner of reason's reliance on this *a priori* conviction? Why, surely it is simply this; reason declares explicitly what the conviction holds implicitly. But to call this centre of man's nature an implanted conviction suggests passivity—something like an umpire or stickler. It is not that, however; the phrase to describe it must strongly imply activity; some such phrase as *implicit imagination*, a source of imaginative desire,—better still, of *imaginative will.* It is something for ever vehemently asserting itself against me; and it asserts itself by shaping whatever of me it can get hold of, into the likeness of itself. It is a stable necessity, but an active necessity. It allows nothing to come into the mind which has not submitted to assume the guise invariably desired. Sensation begins this formation, and reason carries it still further,—reason governing, ordering, and efforming sensation just as sensation governs, orders, and efforms the influx of crude external. What I send into you is formless—not necessarily formless in itself, but formless as far as you are concerned—until you perceive it; perception turns it into something your knowing can appreciate. And perception itself is formless as far as reasonable dealing with it is concerned, until it is, in fact, *reasoned*,—that is, controlled and shaped to the image of reason. So far, then, from reason making perception into a closer image of me, really it is only

empowered by those imaginative desires behind it, from which it gets all its virtue, to form perception into something nearer to what those implicit desires wish for. And how can you ever deal with the purity of my nature, since I can never come into your ken until your imaginative will has meddled with me so masterfully that your knowledge of me is nothing but an utterance of your will in terms of me?—Dreams will give you, like a secluded laboratory experiment, a sort of diagrammatic representation of all this. Men whose hearts labour in disease constantly dream alike: they dream of horses sweating to drag enormous loads up dreadful hills. It is simply that the formless news of their own labouring vitality has been completely *imagined* into something consciousness can accept; and reason gives the significance of the image: the scene of horses fighting with the weight of a load would have no meaning unless reason appreciated—and that is to say, still further *formed*—the image, interrelating all its parts. Such dreams are a type of man's general commerce with the world.

SCIENCE.

But how is it I am so sure that I am dealing with you, and not merely with myself? And you have not yet told me in what way reason has improved. As you are for taking everything else from me, I should like to know something of what you still allow me.

World.

You used lately the expression "conscientious reason"; now is the time for me to return to it. For that is what you really stand for,—reason becoming increasingly conscientious. And what does that mean?—Man is a creature of necessity: but his necessity is his own will—his own creative, or rather formative, will. Wilful imaginative desire is implicit in the depth of his nature; it comes welling out of his centre, and pours in perpetual flooding roundure through his being, powerfully dissolving everything that comes into him. To speak more exactly, the implicit activity of imaginative desire—the *a priori* origin of thinking—is for ever striving to become explicitly distributed throughout all the regions of his practical mind; reason is one kind of its effort to become explicit. For it could not become so at a stroke; that is work for ages to keep on at. And during the process, the explicit must often give an unfair version of the implicit. The implicit is a unity, single, indivisible; but in the course of becoming explicit it becomes an affair of parts, and before these parts come to be balanced, interrelated and subordinated to their whole, so thoroughly that the explicit unity answers at last to the primal implicit unity,—before this can be, some parts must often appear too forward, outweighing and dominating others. Reason, therefore, is conscientious according to the way it puts man's inmost fund of formative desire into cir-

culation ; when I say reason is more conscientious in these days of scientific investigation than it was in the days of pure speculation, I mean that it more completely and more faithfully makes manifold the single activity at the springs of man's will—it more exactly formulates the forces of implanted conviction. Hence, the vision of the world which man's will can present to him to-day is clearer and harder and greater than it was in Greece, because the will now has in reason a more capable instrument—more *serviceable*, since in it more of the implicit desire has become explicitly at work. But also the vision to-day is less passionate than it has been ; for as implicit formative desire becomes more and more explicit in reason, it does indeed work more nicely and deeply, but also it works more coldly. The desire's continual success in changing itself into practicable powers of the mind seems to entail a corresponding continual loss of fervour ; and sometimes I must wonder what will happen when man's will has altogether unfolded itself into overt faculties : will it not find that this very success has put an end to all its motive ? But if that ever comes about, it will mean, I suppose, that the whole of man's implicit desire has imagined itself forth in a vision of the world ; the whole of it will have become explicit, with nothing left in reserve ; the vision, that is to say, will be one which holds nothing mysterious or concealed, man completely knowing himself and thereby completely knowing the world he creates and lives in ; and if that ever

comes about, it may very well be the time for man's will to stop. But this by the way.—Well, now, do you think this should move my contempt? I am a cool person, not given to transports; but I find in you what may very excusably rouse me to admiration —your way of fashioning my nature into the vast involved splendour of that private world which your spirit demands for its habitation.

SCIENCE.

That is only to put the humiliation you intend handsomely.

WORLD.

Indeed, it is hard to convince an idealist that the reality of things may be nobler than his notions.

SCIENCE.

And you have not yet explained my idealism, by which you mean, I suppose, my determination that reason shall give me your nature. I shall not easily budge from a position which still seems so secure.

WORLD.

So far as I can see, it all comes from the congruence between the implicit fund of your imaginative desires and the explicit circulation of this in reason. The mere fact that there is a congruence, you very strongly feel. But that which is profoundly implicit in you is not easy to get at and take firm hold of; possibly you can only really know as much of yourself as has

become explicit. On the whole, then, you merely feel that there is congruence between reason and something you know to be perfectly stable somewhere. Now your attention is fixt on understanding me; for the imagery your will creates is so steady and so complex that it looks quite independent of you—it looks as if it must be *me*. So it is an easy and a tempting jump to say, that I, the world, am what reason is congruent with.

SCIENCE.

And all these years I have been merely investigating myself! You have made out a fine story.

WORLD.

Not so much investigating your Self as your Being—as much of me as you have incorporated into your *Being* and assimilated to it by *knowing*. For obviously your self is not the same thing as your being; your self is your consciousness of your being, of your world. To speak roughly, there are two ways of *knowing what you know* (which is what you are, or have become, by digesting foreign matter,—namely, *Me*); there is your way and there is that of the early Greek speculators. And the fact of these two ways makes you more radically divergent from Greece than the improved conscientiousness of your reason does. Shortly to set it out, pure speculation consists in simply noting the explicit formative desires of the mind,—noting, in fact, *how* the mind works. Scientific investigation, however, consists in noting the work of mind—

what these formative desires *effect*. The two processes, as I have said, give substantially the same result; the "world" which the speculative philosophers said the mind *ought* to make is as near as could be to the "world" which you find the mind does indeed make. Between the two visions of world there are certainly differences, some of them conspicuous enough; but it is easy to see how such differences as these are would come about. In the first place, you pretty strictly confine yourself to as much of the vision of the world as reason is responsible for; but those Greeks did not merely observe the *reasonable* explicitness of man's imaginative will, but practically the whole of it, especially enriching reason from the poetic and ethical styles of explicitness. Hence the "world" they made out has important features which do not occur in your "world," but yet do still notably occur in the "worlds" of poetry and ethics. And then, beside all this, it is much easier to observe the *achievement* of man's imaginative desire, his "world," than to observe the desire itself; and so the early Greeks were more liable to mistake than you are. Nevertheless, the desire is always well ahead of its achievement. Thus it is that your business, whether you like it or not, is very largely to *see* the world which Greek speculation simply *thought of*. So, too, now: the speculative conception of space, for instance, is a long way ahead of experience; speculation knows that the mind ought to have certain spatial experiences, long before these are anywhere near achievement;

and it must be part of the business of science in the future to *see* those kinds of space which now can only be supposed. Well, after all this, need I say again that what I am in myself, the purity of my being, can never come to you? For whatever of me does come to you, comes by being known; and knowing is essentially an imaginative or formative act; I cannot declare myself to you, unless you yourself have meddled with me. But once more remember, that to note the nature of that which meddles with me—the nature of your imaginative will,—gives practically the same vision of the world as to observe the actual result of its meddling. Your vision is a compound of two elements; you know one of the elements; and it accounts for most of the properties of the compound. That seems to show, I think, that the other element—myself, namely—will be, as far as your vision is concerned, something comparatively inert.

SCIENCE.

All this time you are leaving out of your reckoning a rather remarkable trifle.

WORLD.

What is that?

SCIENCE.

Merely this: that here I am talking face to face with you—you, throughout all this conversation, admitting by its tone and tenor that I am now, so talking, knowing you yourself, not merely my image of you.

WORLD.

Thank you for reminding me. It is easy in argument to forget the most obvious thing of all; and sometimes it is convenient, keeping discussion clear that might be troubled by its intrusion. But I had not altogether forgotten this; in fact I was keeping it in reserve, as the thing which may serve to re-establish our amity, as I see it, on happier and healthier ground. Yes; it was too positive to say, the purity of my being can never come to you, since it must always come by knowing; this is one of those short whiles in which we do seem to communicate face to face, as you put it, with your usual liking for the form of speech most familiar to common experience. We communicate, let us say, *nature to nature*, not tampering with each other; I not rousing the imagination in your faculties, you not re-making me according to your desire. I am not before you in a *vision* you yourself have made of me; you are merely conscious of me as a being which is not your self;—though that, by the way, does not make it impossible that this being may be your own, since your self is not the same thing as your being. Well, the word nowadays for this style of communication is intuition. Intuition, however, is not really *knowing* a thing, but *becoming* a thing; you seem to fall through your protective sphere of habitual faculties, like a drop of molten metal through a flaw in a crucible, and you become vaporized into the surrounding fire, integrated with it. This, I repeat, is a very different

thing from *knowledge* of the world; that you create for yourself. Intuition certainly does not tell you anything more of what I am apart from your knowledge of me; it merely confirms your suspicion that I do exist apart from your knowledge of me. Your becoming me does not enable you to say *what* the purity of my being is, any more than your knowing me does; my conclusion as to your necessary ignorance of me still stands. Yet it may be that something may be done to *locate* me, as it were.

SCIENCE.

Locate you! We are to have some more whimsy now, I suppose. How can I *place* the world, except by saying that it is external to me?

WORLD.

Intuition, to be sure, will not help us much here. When you seem to communicate with a thing directly, without the exercise of faculties, you have no warrant for saying that it has been with a thing external to your being; you do not bring back from the experience enough positive news for that; strictly, all you can say is: I have been with something, *I have become something*. The something may be an external reality underneath your *knowing*. But the fire you fell into may also have been the outer forces of your own being, what they call your subconscious being. Intuition may be only a momentary change in your manner of inhabiting your own being. But to locate the world—

that which is not your mind, the stuff on which mind works,—we may get something useful from considering certain special kinds of *knowing*. Let me take again those dreams I mentioned just now. In them, something which happens altogether in the dreamer's subconscious life—say, the oppressed labouring of his heart—is presented to his consciousness completely shaped into a familiar train of imagery; imagery which is utterly different from the thing so formed, and yet plainly and constantly symbolic of it. The point here for me, however, is that, as long as the dreamer is dreaming, the images seem in every way external to him; they look as if they were entirely outside of him, having quite independent existence; and so he accepts them. His consciousness may be acute enough to enable him to say, I know I am dreaming; but that does not affect the unquestionably external appearance of the imagery. He has known the exceptional state of his own being in precisely the same way as he knows that which he calls externality in everyday life; it is only when he wakes up that he realizes the dream to be altogether within him. And here is another instance of the same sort of thing, more remarkable because it occurs in waking hours. I mean the seeing of ghosts.

SCIENCE.

Ghosts? What have I to do with ghosts?

WORLD.

As much as you have to do with any sort of fact.

SCIENCE.

You tell me ghosts are facts? You?—not my sort of fact, anyway.

WORLD.

You mean that the facts you want are the facts of experience common to the majority of people. But I do not see why you only want that sort of fact; and actually you do not so absurdly limit yourself. The appreciation, and still more the invention, of some of your theories and processes of thought are facts of experience which can belong to very few people; yet they are none the less valuable to you.

SCIENCE.

Ghosts are hallucination; you may call hallucination a fact if you like, but a theory is—well, it is a theory, quite different.

WORLD.

When I say "ghosts," I mean, of course, "seeing ghosts"; just as, when I speak of you and say "your world," I mean "your seeing the world." If a man says, "I see a ghost," there you have a fact from which there is no getting away; and, I should have thought, a very interesting fact. However, as you have not studied ghosts, I must tell you what they are. Some people, it appears, are much more easily affected than others by disturbance in their subconscious natures; either subsconsciousness with them is more liable to

disturbance, or its movement is more likely to reach consciousness. In any case, something which occurred in subconscious being (whatever its cause may have been first of all) comes within the boundaries of radiant conscious knowing. It has to be presented to the man's self; and how is that done? By shaping it into some version—perhaps, owing to the unusual material, a fantastic version—of familiar and recognizable form; that is to say, some faculty of formative desire has compelled it to accept the first condition of conscious experience—congruence with mind's implicit imagination. And we know from the way ghost-seers talk of their ghosts, that the result is not only as vivid as any other experience; the image also has all the air of existing externally. So now, what have we? These dreams and these ghosts are ways of *knowing* the subconscious. But the style of the knowing and the result of the knowing are precisely the same as when that which common sense (or easy-going sense) calls externality is known. Since both the subconscious and the presumed externality are alike known by mind, and since the result of knowing both is exactly the same, must we not say that the two things known are also the same? For we have in effect two equations, both of which have two terms on one side and one on the other. But the single term in each is the same thing; and of the two sets of double terms, one again is the same in each. There seems no help for it, then, but to conclude that the remaining term is also the same in each equation. The subcon-

scious, then, is the same thing as the supposed externality ; and indeed an air of externality is as essentially characteristic of any vision of things the mind may create, as necessary for acceptable presentation, and as much the property of man's imaginative will, as the unity, the co-ordination, the reasonableness, and the rest of the qualities of the world which mind experiences : man imagines externality as he imagines everything else in what he knows.

SCIENCE.

Wherever have we got to now ?

WORLD.

Why, this is where we are : *I am your own being.* I speak to you now not simply as Science, but as Man. And I say, that if your Self could so enlarge its knowledgeable radiations as to take in the whole of what you suppose to be externality, you would find that you know thereby nothing more than the whole of your own being. But nothing less ; for conversely, if you were conscious of all of you, you would thereby be conscious of all that is. You must not think of yourself as something established into consciousness within a private vessel of your own nature, and that again established apart in the general mass of external being ; you must think that that which contains consciousness is *all one perfectly continuous kind of being.* Call it externality or subconscious life as you please ; but do not make these different things. Your Self is

within your being; and your being is commensurate with—Existence. Now do you see why I can only look in on you through a window? For if I were to come right into your room, I should no longer exist for you; since only by having that of which it is conscious completely apart from it, outside of it, can consciousness be. Consciousness can only exist by virtue of decided duality. And now do you think we may rebuild our friendship on this footing? I am sure an excellent friendship should answer to such close relationship as ours.

SCIENCE.

I must think about it, I must think about it. And if ever I have done anything to please you, or anything to win your admiration (you are kind enough to suggest that), do grant me this simple request: Go away! I can do nothing until I have made notes of your talk, indexed them, worked them out coolly in the light of disinterested reason, and made them, if that be at all possible, manageable. This intuition is very upsetting to orderly habits of thought; one easily has enough of it.

VII
PHILOSOPHY AND THE ANGEL

PHILOSOPHY AND THE ANGEL

PHILOSOPHY.

Truth, my Truth? Pleasant, beautiful Truth, at last, then, I have met you!

THE ANGEL.

Have you, indeed?

PHILOSOPHY.

No more ardent greeting than that for me, who have so mightily and painfully pursued you with my searching—ranging continually in hope of hearing some sign of your voice, nigh wearing out my eyes with perusing the ground for your beloved footing?

ANGEL.

Ah, so it was to me you were speaking?

PHILOSOPHY.

To whom else? Are we not alone in this shining Empyrean? There is no one else abroad in it that I can see.—O, always I knew it would fall out like this! I knew your ways and manners to be so strange, desirable Truth, that not to me in one of my burning moods of longing for you, but to me at leisure, and casually wandering, you would in the end present

yourself. And at last I have met you !—But why that affectation of surprise, when I exclaimed at the sight of you ? Surely you knew, dear Truth, that I must at long last find you out ? You could not hope to evade me for ever ?

ANGEL.

But I was not quite sure whether I was the party you were exclaiming at.

PHILOSOPHY.

I ask again, whom else could I have been addressing ?

ANGEL.

You might have been talking to yourself. You often do talk to yourself, you know.

PHILOSOPHY.

I do not know it. And what reason have you for supposing that you know it ?—O, but this is not at all what I expected ! I did think I might look that our meeting would be some admirable rapture, when your game of maidenly avoidance at last came to end. I did think we should be united, like air and fire, in a nuptial hour flaming out beyond the limits of this world and of all its heavens, with a flame purer even than the nature of this Empyrean.—And you look inquisitively on me ; your welcome is, Am I not talking to myself ?

ANGEL.

It is a little difficult for me to make a bustle out of

meeting you here; beeause, you see, I know you so well already. I have been watching you pretty closely for some thousands of years now; and, indeed, I have often leant right over you, to pore upon your brain and admire your meditations.

PHILOSOPHY.

And do not I know you well also, even though till now I have never seen you? When you were leaning over me, was I not aware of you? Was not your presence thrilling in my blood and delightfully seizing my spirits?—But those moments, in my case, were very far from making stale the expectation of our meeting at last!—And tell me; did you not find, when you lookt into my brain, something worthy of your love as well as your admiration? I think no being has ever yearned as I have yearned for you, my Truth!

ANGEL.

Yes, I may certainly say that what I perceived in your brain has made me friendly disposed to you; for I perceived there, as you remind me, a yearning which seemed an image of my own yearning,—my yearning for perfection.

PHILOSOPHY.

But you are Truth! How can Truth, the Perfect One, yearn to be better than herself?

ANGEL.

We will come to that in a minute.—As I say, I perceived a great deal that was to me agreeable in you. But I could not help perceiving also, that a habit had strongly fastened on your mind, a habit of talking to yourself. Its grip strengthened as the centuries past, until sometimes I would be thinking you lived in a perpetual soliloquy. And it was my knowledge of this habit of yours which caused me to doubt whether, in your first exclamation, you were speaking to me or to yourself.

PHILOSOPHY.

But I called you by your name.

ANGEL.

You called me Truth. I am an Angel; or rather, as far as you and your kin are concerned, I am the Angel.

PHILOSOPHY.

The Angel, yes; the Angel of Truth, Man's Guardian Angel. I have not been used to thinking of you as an Angel, but I see no reason why you should not be one.

ANGEL.

But suppose you did see some such reason; suppose it violated the convenience, or even the nature, of your mind, to believe that Truth could be what you see I am, a personal, formal, created being; what then?

PHILOSOPHY.

Why, then, of course, in saying you were both Truth and an Angel, you would have been telling a lie; so you could not be Truth. Whether you could be an Angel or not, I do not know; as to the veracity of Angels, we have nothing to go on.

ANGEL.

Well, I will give you such a reason. Being an Angel (and I undoubtedly am one), a personal creature inhabiting, immersed in, and through all my substance belonging to, the endless change of existence, it follows that I am not a finality, but rather a process, as man is; something continually proceeding from one state to another; and, I may tell you, vehemently desiring that this process shall be towards a private imagination of my own, which I call perfection. At any rate, I, who am an angel, am therefore imperfect, and know myself to be so. Truth, however, must (whatever it may mean) be perfect; must at least be final and stationary. So you see, dear Philosophy, that I cannot be Truth. And yet your feelings irresistibly tell you, that I am the person whom you exist to please and honour, whose greeting you have desired above every other desire.

PHILOSOPHY.

They do, they do. And yet you are not Truth? I cannot account for it.—This is a very disagreeable situation for me to be in!

ANGEL.

Manners, Philosophy, manners.

PHILOSOPHY.

But wait a minute. In the astonishment of meeting you, I have forgotten some of my recent speculations. Truth, I have lately thought, has been too stiffly maintained as a finality. May not even Truth be a process; not the end of being, but a mode of being; not the final aim, but simply a direction? In that case you, who (I must admit it) are certainly my dear desire, might also be Truth. It seems tenable; and it would explain why my heart became so glorious at the sight of you, why it so mightily recognizes in you the satisfaction of its inmost hope.

ANGEL.

You may very well, Philosophy, if you choose, go after something which is not ultimate; something which belongs to change, rather than something which is beyond and behind change. But do not call that quarry Truth; for you are then only following in the wake of an endless process; but Truth cannot but mean *the end of something*. I can see nothing gained by mixing up immediate evaluation of fluid existence with the idea of ultimate truth. Truth may be a notion; but assuredly, it is a notion of fixity.

PHILOSOPHY.

Yes, I suppose it is; yet might it not be a fixity carried along by the stream of change: not changing itself, but yet swept forward by change, like the heart of a travelling whirlwind?

ANGEL.

I hardly think that will do. You must be sore put to it if you have to imagine a thing which, though it move through space and move through time, is yet not change. But indeed I sympathize with your wish to keep the mere name of Truth alive. I can easily understand that, after all these centuries of vainly pursuing Truth, the affair has become a little wearisome to you; and I can also understand that it seemed convenient to shift the aim of your pursuit without shifting its name. We are never obliged to let on that we have fooled ourselves. Nevertheless, I do think this Truth of yours was a very good thing for you. The belief that you might some day come up with her undoubtedly kept you alert and vigorous. I hope the new plan may answer as well.

PHILOSOPHY.

Surely it is putting the case rather strangely, to say that the function of Truth is to keep one's brain alert and vigorous; surely it would be wiser to say, that the function of an alert and vigorous brain is to find out Truth.

ANGEL.

You do, then, still believe that Truth exists?

PHILOSOPHY.

Do not you believe it?

ANGEL.

It is not easy for me to answer that in one word. But I would say, first, that having convinced myself that there is existence at all, having assured myself of that stupendous miracle, I am ready to believe anything. And next, I would say that, so long as you believe in Truth's existence, I will certainly believe it also; for your belief in her may be said to be her existence, since certainly what is in you *is*, as much as anything else. But, as there has been a time when Truth did not exist, so no doubt a time may come when she ceases to exist.

PHILOSOPHY.

When I cease to believe in her?—If Truth depends on me, I think she is safe. I think a stronger compulsion than reason will keep me believing in her; the needs of my spirit will hold me there.

ANGEL.

Yes; and if, as I guess, you yourself do not quite understand what that means, I will tell you. Your spirit needs above all else a life of vigorous desire; indeed, the profound necessity of its existence is that it

may *desire itself;* and this primal desire all other desires feed. Hitherto the belief in Truth has supplied your main spiritual necessity with its most admirable nourishment; and without you proposed the discovery of Truth as the end of your being, it is too likely you would flag, and would go on in some listless and heartless fashion. It is for this, then, that I revere Truth, whether she be a real person like you and me, or a phantom inhabiting your spirit; because she keeps you, Philosophy, ardent in your life. That is what I meant when I said, Truth is good for you. And what is good for you is, in a manner, good for me; it is at any rate wonderfully desirable to me that you should maintain those soaring excitements which the desire for Truth causes in you. For I am in you and I share them; and they are good for me.

PHILOSOPHY.

But who are you? Who can it be that is in me and shares my transports; whom yet I so desired to meet with that, when I found her, it seemed that I had found the Truth; who also, it seems, considers me desirable? Who are you, I say?

ANGEL.

I am the Angel of Life; I am the whole summed expressed Consciousness of Earthly Life.

PHILOSOPHY.

I begin to understand a little.

ANGEL.

I wonder if you do. I wonder if I can trust you to believe that, when you go burning after Truth, or whatever noble lust may possess you, you do it for my delight; and you do it also not originally to come up with Truth, but wholly to contrive the method of your being a little nearer to the likeness of me, who am the angelic consciousness of life. For we are in a strange way, you and I, Philosophy. I am in you, but you are not altogether in me. To your striving spirit, I seem, in your rare moments of extravagant perception, a passive excellence of untroubled light far above you; and the effort of striving to raise yourself completely into my clear quietude is the main delight for which you exist,—yes, be you aware of it or not. And as for me, the pleasure of my being is nothing else than feeling you (and some others like you) endeavouring and venturing up to me. And the queer thing is, that you cannot do this forthright and straightforward, but only by increasing the whole and general ardency of your nature; and that is to be done by the exultation of some such pursuit as your hunting after Truth.

PHILOSOPHY.

You would say, then, if I take you aright, that there is no such thing as the True Philosophy,—Philosophy *become* the Truth in some wonderful marriage? Since Truth is a thing I am merely to

pursue, without any likelihood of real capture, but just so that the excitements of pursuing may help to make me similar to yourself, may pour into the fires of my awareness a wind like purged air, till they become a flame resembling your purity ; and also, it appears, that you may be delighted with the spectacle of my striving.

ANGEL.

That, I think, is what I would say. But not simply as a brave spectacle do your endeavours delight me. For certainly the life which feeds me passes through you, as it passes through everything ; therefore, if the life, which comes to me through you, comes charged and empowered with exultations you have achieved, I receive and am bettered by the experiences you have roused in. I indeed share the joys of your efforts to become at one with myself, the angelic presiding consciousness ; even though (as is more often likely than not) you know not what may be that inmost desire of yours, which those efforts strive to utter.

PHILOSOPHY.

It is quite true that I often do not rightly know what my efforts mean even to myself. Why, when all is said (I have askt myself), do I so strongly want to find this Truth ? Life seems to go on, and pretty tolerably on the whole, without our knowing the truth of it. Then why am I perpetually moved by ceaseless desire to take hold of truth ? Why should I let myself be altogether managed by it, like a cork in

a stream ?—I see now that I could have nothing to answer; for this very desire was simply the utterance of another desire,—the desire to grow up into you, by a vehement kindling of my spirits.

ANGEL.

Yes; for your desire to grow up into me is but the clearest heat of your *desire for yourself.* Where your self-consciousness is at the top of its ardour, there you touch me and join on to me; you become me by perfectly becoming yourself.

PHILOSOPHY.

And now having seen you, I can no more doubt the tendency of my efforts than, having seen the sun, a man could doubt whence the earth has her light. The desire for truth was but the contrivance of my desire for you.

ANGEL.

And so for the extremest purity of yourself.

PHILOSOPHY.

And yet, even so, the question is but a little shifted.

ANGEL.

What else can ever happen to any question ? I can say no more than that the make of existence is such that all of it is compelled to require not only always more joy, but always more possibility of joy; and that means, always larger and intenser conscious-

ness. It is for this that you are driven to aspire to my condition ; and it is this that gives me my delight in your aspiring ; for even by the mere effort to reach me your consciousness is increased, and the more conscious is the life beneath me, the more thereby delightedly conscious am I myself, and heightened up above it.

PHILOSOPHY.

I must return to that. Meanwhile I wish you to tell me why hitherto you have never evidently seemed the end of my desire, but only vaguely, dimly, and casually ; whereas Truth has always very strongly seemed so. When just now I came upon you, instantly I knew it was you in whose invisible service my being lives and worships ; and (this is my wonder) I therefore concluded you must be the Truth. Tell me, if you can, why was this mistake so fixt in me ?

ANGEL.

I do not know if I can ; for I am little more informed about the fashion of your nature than you are yourself. I can only perceive more clearly what it is you tend towards ; for I look down on your tendency. But I can tell you how the matter appears to me. This Truth, then, which you have thought to exalt into a worship (thereby, however, really worshipping me), this high Truth of yours seems to me nothing greatly otherwise than the truth of ordinary events in the mind of an ordinary man. Something happens to a man ; and he says, I will find out the truth of this

affair. So what does he? He traces the manner of his event as far back as he can; until, indeed (for this must certainly occur), he comes to a barrier that stops not only his thinking, but even his conception. He is like a hound which has nosed on a scent till he finds his smelling made useless by a river. And the man calls this barrier, the truth of the matter. But what is it? Simply the limit of his mental action. And is not that somewhat, and more than somewhat, as you do? When you pursue Truth, you are but tracing a process of events, whether inward or outward, as far as your mind will take you. You are not, it is true, so simple as to make out that the limit of your mental action *is* the Truth; but from this, nevertheless, you derive your masterful notion of Truth. For it is strangely necessary for man to imagine in the world correspondence with himself; it is a mode of his *desire for himself*, which is vigorous enough to make him desire all things to be like himself. And what is true of man is true of you, Philosophy; you are made of him, made of his infirmities as well as of his excellences. And so you, strongly perceiving that there is limit in your mental action (which may be said, as far as it goes, to run alongside of event), suppose that there is also limit somewhere in worldly event. The parallelism of mind and event is your world; and since this stops at last—not because the lines at last run together, but merely because one of the lines ends off—it is natural for you to conclude that event also has a stop to it; not, indeed, necessarily

where your mind stops, but still a stop somewhere. It is what you call the Truth: for, if there be Truth at all, it must be something you cannot get past. You have, you see, got this notion of fixity firm in your mind, from feeling the fixity of the barricades behind which your thought works, and over which it cannot climb. It does not matter where these barricades are fixt; the space within them is a little roomier now than it was once, and no doubt varies from mind to mind, and perhaps from time to time in the same mind. That does not alter the strong impression produced on any moment of usual consciousness in any mind, and in you, Philosophy, by feeling these steadfast barricades, the limits of thought. The impression is, that there is such a thing as fixity; for thought always finds this seeming fixity at the end of any investigation, not perceiving that it is merely finding out the length of its own tether. And the impression is so strong, that man must diligently search the world that comes pouring through his mind for sign of this imagined fixity. He would discover in the movement of this torrent of world some relation to a central pivot; he would have its ceaseless onrush a whole consistent permanency, repeatedly swinging on a hinge of fixity, which is his Truth. And it is but seldom he can believe he is thereby turning an infirmity into a worship. Moreover, to make him more confident in his search for the Truth, man supposes a species of *real* fixity in himself, in the nature of his own reason; he conceives in himself

the possibility of arraigning before some determinate judgment the infinitely flowing universe; whereas he himself is but a whirl of incessant change, seized into a brief eddying unity of motion, going along with the stream it was formed from, the streaming change of the world. Thus, at any rate, it appears to me; you force your main efforts into the search for Truth, because you hope that, when you shall have found it, you will also have found a noble excuse for the notion of fixity which prevails in you. What seems to me chiefly remarkable in this notion of Truth is, that in it you have imagined a possibility of conscious existence which can never be consciously realized; the possibility of relating your flying existence with something fixt. It keeps you constantly excited into effort. And whenever you find yourself consciously roused into some novel elation, you at once hope, and for a time believe, that it is because the flung hawser of your hulling mind has at last caught firm on the wharf of a fixt principle. But the rope always soon slips off and slackens; it was only, perhaps, tugged out and tautened by some unusual stress of water. However, this, I think, explains why, perceiving me, and perceiving how your heart greeted me, you were ready to swear I was the Truth.

PHILOSOPHY.

My search for Truth, I suppose, seems an impertinence to you.

ANGEL.

I have not said so, and I have not meant it. On the contrary, I have spoken out my anxiety lest you should ever give over your searching. But in one way, I do perceive a certain disadvantage in your preoccupation with Truth. For when you have failed to come on her by running in one direction, you are apt to believe that there you went notably wrong; and your efforts in that direction you sum up as a False Philosophy. This, I confess, I do not altogether like.

PHILOSOPHY.

Why, no; I dare say not. If it is merely effort, and its consequent enhancing of consciousness, that you require as my service to you, no doubt you would as soon see me adventuring one way as another; it must be all one to you. But surely, even in your view, it is best for me to go along that road which, at the moment, seems likeliest to bring me up with Truth.

ANGEL.

Of course; it would not do for either of us if the business became anything of a pretence. There is certainly a deal of mental activity among men which is nothing to me, and, I hope, nothing to you. For example, to watch a theologian deciding that God is almighty, but only on condition that He cannot undo what He has done, may be amusing, but is as little exhilarating to me as, say, the spectacle of an

ape searching its fur for fleas, or the spectacle of Comte inventing the religion of sentiment in a bawdy-house. And I must go carefully here, if I am to miss offending you. But first I had better be clear that it is not simply effort I want from you, but rather exultation; such effort, then, as will lift you into the way of exultation. Commonly, you feel your consciousness to be sunk in the depth of the world as if enclosed in a vessel, a vessel which may, no doubt, be somewhat glassy in its transparency, but is altogether glassy in its rigour. And as I say, it is by thus perceiving yourself enclosed in the apparent fixity of yourself that you are urged to look hopefully out of yourself into the world, in search of fixity there also, to correspond with your sense of yourself. But this is what is to me most noticeable, and this is what I like best in you; that the hope of finding this correspondence adds a passion to your studying of the world, and thence an exultation of desire, and of seeming near satisfaction of desire, takes hold of you; so much so that, at last, does not that originating sense of personal fixity strangely pass from you, and become forgotten in the exultation it caused? You radiate yourself out of yourself. Indeed, you do then truly project yourself; for when you seem just reaching to the central fixity of things, even then you seem to have lost the fixity of yourself; it has gone forth of you, and appears as something outside you. The vessel enclosing your consciousness has dissolved in your exultation, like glass in the fiercest of the

acids; until, set free and dilating abroad, you seem to pervade the world of outward event; and you are on the way to me, the way of wholly becoming the angelic consciousness of life.

PHILOSOPHY.

But if it be only illusion, this feeling of dissolution and escape and immense expatiation?

ANGEL.

If it be only illusion! What concern is that of yours? Or of mine? Your business, and mine too, is——

PHILOSOPHY.

Is what?

ANGEL.

Self-desire, thence self-enjoyment. That is the highest existence can offer us. And there is no need to ask you not to take the word enjoyment too easily; nor to show at large that it means, the possession of a consciousness that wonderfully likes being conscious, a wealth of which the currency is joy; nor to remind you that pleasure is most gravely to be distinguished from joy. Joy always enhances consciousness, but pleasure often diminishes it. We do not know what may be the end of existence, but we do very well know what is the means it uses to that end; and on the means the business of our lives is to insist; and it is joy. Or if we do insist on some supposed or mistily perceived end, it is only that we may thereby the

more employ the means; there only is safety. We cannot, even in conceit, jump out of change into any finality, we who are made of change. As for me, I am life perfectly conscious, yet am I a long way from being life perfect; for I must still be going on towards the state my desire knows of, the state in which I match my perfect consciousness with a perfect enjoyment thereof. You and your friends must help me.

PHILOSOPHY.

It seems I do that whether I will or no.

ANGEL.

Yes, but you may do still more.

PHILOSOPHY.

And how?

ANGEL.

By not too generously reproaching yourself with supposed errors; by not making too much of that which you call False Philosophy; by not too strictly discouraging your servants from going any road that seems to delight them, even though it be a road on which you have yourself turned a misliking back. It is here I must go carefully. I am far from suggesting you should be more easy in your tests of truthfulness; I do not ask you to be less scrupulous in your search, —rather, I think, to be more scrupulous; to remember, at any rate, that all men are not alike, and that if a man sees some sort of a truth in the universe, and the

vision, even though it be not yours, makes his consciousness arrogant in the joy of its existence, you may, as far as he is concerned, be satisfied with him, for he has satisfied me ; he has given me that nourishment of exultation I require,—the nourishment which, as I suppose, will make consciousness at last a thing utterly justified in its own existence. There is no False Philosophy ; there is no True Philosophy ; there is only, in my view, Exultant Philosophy. I mean, that is the only philosophy that to me is significant. In your noble being are summed and expressed the efforts of all the men which serve you ; therefore, at any particular hour, the thought of the most numerous and vehement of your servants will be the thought uppermost in you,—the prevailing philosophy. I am not impugning the reality of your personal existence ; I am simply examining its elements a little. Well : you see how your authority is constructed ? At bottom, in majority. And the behaviour I would have in you is a little less rigour in your management of your servants ; not indeed less concern in their searching for Truth, but rather more freedom of acknowledgment that any one of your servants, whose brain is alight with the manner of his thinking, is doing admirably, whatever opinion you may have of that manner of thought itself. When a man offers you his service, do not ask him if he thinks as you think ; ask him if he enjoys his thinking. There was a fine instance of this some years agone,—that capital fellow Nietzsche, I mean. You were distrust-

ful of him, were you not? And because you found his mind a strange one, leaping into attitudes that were doubtless (some of them) fantastical, unaccountable, and absurd to you. What then? Was there any man living at that time who could put into the brains of those like to him in make, a more delighted sense of being consciously alive? And was not that the chief of the business? You should therefore have ornamented him with all your favour. Now, he is like to inspire a good part of your service; all the world is the better for him, except, perhaps, the Nietzscheans, eager to seize on his triviality and blaze it to the world that has long since acknowledged his seriousness. And see what comes of your example in this way, of your dislike for the man who cares not to think as you think, because not that way can his spirit live upright and alight. These Nietzscheans, and indeed many wiser than they, think scorn of those who cannot enjoy Nietzsche's image of the world; whereas Eucken and Bergson do just as well, for those whose brains think pleasantly in the style of Eucken and Bergson. It is the same all through. What rouses one, sends another to the dismals. Recognize this frankly, and maybe the life you supply me with will come hotter and brighter from you; for there will be more persons dwelling in you who will be ready just to enjoy the tallest ardours of their thinking, more persons willing to select just that kind of thought which works in them to the most kindled result. For Heraclitus is as

good as Hegel, Pythagoras no better and no worse than Spinoza, there's nought to choose betwixt Epicurus and Schopenhauer. Ay, for I know, I who look down on you, that even the man who will build about his spirit a grievous and lamentable thought, is excited, and has his consciousness inflamed, by the building of it. Let him that delights in melancholy delight in it still; and try you not to turn him from his proper enjoyment, nor push him away for his black looks. They please him, those black looks of his; and the vision of a desperate world which caused them will, in others as well as in him, enliven more, make consciousness more alert to enjoy itself, than a brighter and more seemingly comfortable vision could. A Pascal delights to think that God means to harass for an eternity of anguish the great multitude of mankind, even of the virtuous. Why is he so certain that this is Truth? Simply because to indulge the thought of an all but universal human perdition causes a burning illumination in his soul: it seems something terrifically fixt in the flow of world, something on which, with the joy of successful effort, he can get a fast hold. And what, again, does that mean? No more than this, that he is made so; to contemplate the damnation of his race is what he dreadfully requires for exultation; this exquisitely satisfies, and by satisfaction admirably exhilarates, the hungriest lust of his spirit. If it disgust you, it will not do for your truth; but let it be Pascal's truth, and let it be the truth of all who have his lust in their spirits. For

this is the fixity they have discovered in their universe, though it be only indeed the projection therein of a presumed fixity of their own ; and the discovery has illuminated, made enjoyable, personality for them ; in the rapture of clearly knowing the furious, pernicious mind of their deity, they are made delightedly aware of themselves ; and that, no matter how it come about, is my unchanging need from the existence that lies below me. Indeed, such folk are experiencing, perhaps, the most flaming and most soaring delight allowed to existence, the high delight of sacred fear : in them, life thrills to know itself journeying through unbelievable risk. They have got their experience, no doubt, in a crude, disgusting manner ; but I care nothing for manner ; result is all that concerns me. I admit, that the particular manner I have just mentioned, may be dangerous to man's commonalty. For suppose there turn up in life one of these fellows whose spirits require for exultation that notion of myriad creatures tormented for ever, and who make their God accordingly ; and suppose he be one who, somehow or other, acquires the power sensuously to realize his imaginative lust : such an one as Calvin, I say. Well, he will not stay long content with his fantasy ; his body cries out to taste the pleasure, as well as his mind. Accordingly, he entraps Servetus and burns him alive, sitting over the ceremony with beaming satisfaction in his eyes, his twitching nose intent on snuffing the savour of a roasting man, his ears relishing the hideous hullabaloo of a man un-

speakably tortured. He may gloss the affair as he pleases; but it must be evident to any candid psychology, that whatever he says is no more than some twisted excuse for thus giving practical effect to his inconceivable lust for the anguish of others. All this, however, is not my affair; it is for men to decide whether their Calvins are to favour me with exultation in this way. Let a man nourish my presiding consciousness with elation in his own, and it is enough for me; I approve him. He has helped existence to walk down the fatal road of the stars with a mind clothed against the darkness in shining amazement at the virtue of being.

PHILOSOPHY.

Ah, you are at religion now; and religion professes experiences which have never been my boast.

ANGEL.

That is nothing to do with me. On the whole, religion, like you, is against matter; that is to say, against Unconsciousness. There is the enemy; and whoever fights it, befriends me.

PHILOSOPHY.

Truly? Even when religion maintains human consciousness to be an evil?

ANGEL.

And does she not even thereby sharpen the per-

ception of consciousness ? Yes, and when she asserts that earthly life is an evil to be endured only for the sake of some superior unearthly life beyond, even then she is adding, against her will, a faculty of enjoyment to life here and now ; she is making tolerable that which many would else find intolerable. This, I admit, is roundabout ; and the method is certainly wasteful ; for a profound mistrust of mundane life, though, in an accidental sort of way, it may give life the possibility of enjoyment, as a martyr enjoys his flames, must yet necessarily hold men severely back from making the most of actual existence. The balance is not easily read here ; on one side hangs this heavy mistrustful suppression of life's ranging faculties, on the other hangs the steadfastness and even the radiance given to those who would otherwise be darkly dissolved in the trouble of living. But in this connection, perhaps the most important fact is, that man has never wholly submitted to the religious desperation ; its greatest triumphs have been only swift epidemics. In any case, there is only one kind of fool which need be reckoned ; and he is the doctrinaire, the man who says stiffly, this kind of art, this kind of religion, this kind of philosophy, is good for life, and all else is bad. I say, no one can ever know exactly what is good for life, except only by positive and particular results ; for what is good varies with the infinitely varying fashion of consciousness. Man may be this and that ; but what above all he must be is a creature capable, though but for a moment, of

knowing himself by ecstasy Conscious Man ;—by ecstasy, I say, for you will not take ecstasy, in the style of some trivial heads, to mean a species of unconsciousness ; you, at least, know that it is rather the supreme of consciousness. I should not, indeed, have used the words " knowing himself by ecstasy," but rather " being himself " ; for ecstasy goes to transcend all knowing, even the knowing of self. In ecstasy a man simply and utterly *is* his own being; he is not saying, " I am I," and so knowing himself ; he is in such purity of *being-himself,* that there is neither need nor room for knowing himself. Many roads lead to this main market-place of light ; all are difficult, and every traveller thinks his is the only road. Some may go through tunnels of dark trance, others through tracts of shining visionary amazement ; both these bands will be of those who begin in some inflamed mood of the heart. They are the mystics, and are apt to claim ecstasy as their special privilege. And you, I dare say, Philosophy, do not care to think of yourself as another means to the end which mysticism also serves. But the final result of impassioned spirit of thought is one with the result of passion in the spirit of the heart. At the moment when at last you know, that you have thought your world into a perfect manner of agreement with your mind's profoundest desire, whether your reality be an endless river of flowing fire or a hard globe of frozen eternity, or a notion too rare to be imaged—at such a moment of intellectual flame you tower far above knowing :

your consciousness has found pure being,—its own pure being: but that is mine also. It has been in ecstasy. I am not sure that these raptures may not be shorter moments in you than, say, in the mystics. But I think they are distinguisht in you more certainly from the processes that lead to them; often have the long preparations of the mystics been taken for great endurance of ecstasy, when the ecstasy has in truth topt their obscure trances and bewildering visions only like a bright point of flame above a great stack of fuel. Granted, though, that your ecstatic moments may be shorter than theirs, I am sure that yours go into a higher and clearer light; you bring into your glories less of the bodily fume. And for the government of this capability in man there are no laws, except the law of each man's own nature. Let a man have for a moment a consciousness delighted into ecstasy, and, I say, whatever has caused it has been divinely good for him. I see these moments like scattered sparks in the benighted mass underneath me; but the time will come, I well believe, when the mass will seem to me all glowing, itself the furnace and itself the ore marvellously smelted to incandescent metal. And then, too, *my* time will have come!—This is how the whole matter appears to me: the life beneath me must be triumphant in its knowledge of itself; and I care not how that come about, so long as come it does. For this, as things are now among men, mystical religion can do as much, I dare say, as you can, Philosophy ,you who

are, I do not mind confessing, joined with Poetry in the chief share of my favouritism. And you are a favourite of mine because your persuasions to delight in the powers of consciousness are more direct, and so more earnest than any others; not that earnestness in itself is the thing for me, but that its result is more profoundly kindling than other moods. And, as I conceive, when the triumph of man's life nears its height, it will not need the levers and engines of supernal notions to heave its nature delightedly upright against material fate; but it will leap there of itself, remembering your persuasions, empowered, as by the simplicity of rage, by candid conscious enjoyment of life.

PHILOSOPHY.

All this, no doubt, is very well; but if you please we will have something definite. If I present man's spirit with some great and vehement idea of the world, such as is not to be apprehended without thrilling, without notably enriching his conscious life, I am doing the one work needed?

ANGEL.

Assuredly.

PHILOSOPHY.

Let us then go back to Nietzsche. Was that Eternal Recurrence of his an idea of the kind I have mentioned?

ANGEL.

No question of it. Many times, thrilling appre-

hension of that idea down among men has empowered my angelic being.

PHILOSOPHY.

Well, then. Will you make out that that idea of the world is, in itself, no better than, say, the gnostic idea of the world ?

ANGEL.

No better ? The absurdity is, to compare them at all. But suppose a mind, at this age of the earth, who could, exactly as you relish your desire of truth, relish the gnostic idea, with its exquisite, spiderish, unbelievable intricacy of glittering spun system, webbed across the hollow of the void ; well, such a mind would certainly be one for which Eternal Recurrence would be no more than a sleight of words ; and to tell this man that gnosticism is philosophically all wrong, but the other is likely to be right, would be altogether beside the point, and would offend me. But this also is evident ; that the man to whom Eternal Recurrence is the thing would be a man capable of greatly more towering exultation than the other. For this idea is a daring to trade openly with eternity ; and to do that, not only must a mind take its station on a vast height of intellectual endeavour, it must be, like the mind of Nietzsche or Lucretius (who has the better claim to the notion), one able to look through all the comforts and satisfactions of system, and bravely endure, nay, mightily enjoy, the unendurable, *the interminable*. But to every man his own world,

provided it be a world of which he vehemently desires to fashion a mental image; for the fashioning will, in his own sensation, handsomely excuse his conscious living, by making it in the labour a thing delighted. And when it is done, the delight in it is not done; for he has built himself a pinnacle whence he may enjoy the noble ardours of speculation. Let the pinnacle be built where and how he likes, so long as it gives his spiritual vision some lofty standing in the world. No need to ask why all this is delightful. The only need you have is to serve life's requirement of joy; and that is serving me. Anything which in any man helps self-awareness to be joyously pleased with itself, helps the whole kind of man to be nearer to me, the angelic consciousness of life; and helps me on to the perfection of my desire.

PHILOSOPHY.

Besides me, there are others helping you to your desire?

ANGEL.

As I have said; I am helped innumerably; whatever employs brain and spirit can help me. I like your help and Poetry's help best, and next, I think, the help of Music. But, to be sure, I do not understand that there is any height of boundary which can separate you at your loftiest from Poetry at her loftiest; or perhaps from Music either. However, I refuse nothing that is to my purpose, not even the unwilling help of religion, though it comes to me in a queer and round-

about fashion. But nothing goes altogether straightforward; existence is all and always roundabout.

PHILOSOPHY.

Angel, I am a little puzzled still. If everything which brings me and mankind nearer to you, does also bring you nearer to your desire of perfection, either we must in the end share your perfection, catching you up, or the whole business is a paradox; for still as we approach you, you are removed from us.

ANGEL.

What! are you still looking to find a finality proposed, either to your race or to mine?

VIII

TIME AND ETERNITY

TIME AND ETERNITY

ETERNITY.

I know thee, Time; I know thee who thou art!
Why art thou daring here? Why comest thou
Impudently upright walking, and not crookt
Before me, worshipping my majesty?
Nay, why art here at all, miserable thing?
'Tis insult that I will not bear, to see
Thy boldness facing me, thou who art nought
But a vile slander on my infinite virtue.
I think thou hast forgotten what thou art!
Knowest thou not, thou mean deformity,
Thou art my vile disgrace, my secret shame?—
That to such travesty my perfect light
Is thrawn and twisted, when it shineth through
That piece of speckled faulty wrinkled glass,
The wicked feebleness which is man's brain.
And wilt thou be so brave, to show me here
How the grand circling-forth of my renown
Can shrink to thy low creeping rumour; how
The sacred blaze of my sublimity
Can dwindle wretchedly to dull smouldering
Superstition of thee, thou Time, thou libel!
Avoid me! for I will not be affronted
By thy degraded image of my splendour.

TIME.

Eternity, I suppose everyone must admire the way your sense of dignity can always prompt your speech into blank verse. But I am minded to talk with you a little; and will it not better suit the convenience of discourse if you speak prose?

ETERNITY.

This is intolerable! You minded to speak with me? And presuming to tell me how I am to speak?

TIME.

That is better. I am a rhythmic creature myself, but even I must admit that it is pleasanter to use prose unless one is really in some sort of a rapture. And, you know, I cannot help thinking the speech you have just addressed to me was urged by a somewhat adventitious emotion.

ETERNITY.

How am I to endure this? A handsome impudence indeed, to assure me that my contempt for you is adventitious! You are the person, are you, who knows Eternity better than he knows himself? You, you, sneaking Time, know how it feels to be Eternity, do you?

TIME.

I do not pretend to that. I meant merely this, that I think you must know in your heart, despite

the superiority you assume by reason of this fortunate station of yours in clear unplaced sublimity, you must know secretly, I say, that you and I are equals ; or if not quite that, at any rate, not so different from one another that there can be any reason for scorn between us.

ETERNITY.

Truly I think it is time you began to talk verse. You are evidently in some sort of a rapture ; though what wicked crazy taking it may be, I care not to inquire. Equals, are we ? No reason for scorn between us ? And you deal me this unheard-of insolence after I have just told you plainly what you are !

TIME.

Indeed ? I thought you were merely decorating your verses. What am I, then, to your seeming ?

ETERNITY.

You are simply the distorted, broken, limited gleam of my infinite glory of light, as it is refracted by the mind of man.

TIME.

So that I depend on the mind of man for my being ?

ETERNITY.

On the mind of man ; that is the miserable, piddling condition of your existence.

TIME.

Has it never struck you, that you yourself may be in precisely the same case?

ETERNITY.

By My Self, if it were possible for me to sit down, I should do so now, from mere astonishment at your brazening. What! you would make out the existence of Eternity to be of one condition with your own wretched existence?

TIME.

If it is as absurd as all that, there is no need to exclaim so mightily about it. Your loudness rather seems to show, that you may suspect the possibility of truth in my remarks.

ETERNITY.

I will quietly show you your absurdity, then. Anything which dwells in man must conform to his dimensional nature; but that which does not so conform, we may be altogether certain is by no means dwelling in man.

TIME.

How do I conform to man's dimensional nature?

ETERNITY.

In that you are duration of being. But I am not duration, nor anything near it; I am purely a manner

of being,—the ultimate, essential, utterly perfect manner of being. Have I satisfied you?

TIME.

Not quite. I doubt the grounds of your reasoning. —I think that probably what is working within you is something like this. For absolute being, either time or eternity is required. Obviously it is not I who am required, for I, Time, am simply duration. Then, say you, it must be Eternity. But what I am wondering is, if either of us have any part in absolute being, if either of us exist except by virtue of man's mind, non-dimensional though you be.

ETERNITY.

The maddest notion! For in that case, how do I come in at all, if not in absolute being?

TIME.

I am only suggesting possibilities, as a protest against you taking yourself so proudly for granted.— How do you come in? Why, it might be thus; that as I am an infirmity of man, you are a sort of ecstasy caused by the infirmity, as some diseases prompt burning flights of delirium. And as we naturally expect that I, the infirmity, should be conformable to man's dimensional kind, so the very thing we should expect of you, the ecstasy, is that you should *not* so conform.

ETERNITY.

I think I see now the notion that is moving your mind, though it has taken a wonderfully wrong hold of you. Undoubtedly, there are high moments of ecstasy in man's progress, wherein he is strangely open to glimpses of my supreme light. In spite of your officious presence there, man's consciousness is occasionally visited by flashes of me, of my undisturbed purity, by cause of sudden instantaneous towering impulses, that raise him to a lightning-swift and lightning-brief capacity for Eternity, for the timeless perfection of being. And man wisely concludes that these soaring moments are the noblest reward of his earthly progress; so that it might be said that I, Eternity, am the true fate of man; not you, his immediate mastery, Time.

TIME.

I see no profit in entering into that. Let us keep to these glimpses of Eternity you admit in man. Well, it is because of these glimpses man has his notion of you, Eternity. But are they really glimpses? That is what seems to me questionable. Are they flashes sent down by you, and accepted by mind when it is in some peculiarly favourable state? Or are the flashes a distant response in mind to some quite other stimulus; and is it perhaps out of these bright extravagances of the human spirit that your existence is really composed? In a word, do you cause the

flashes, or do the flashes cause you?—The fact is, Eternity, we do not sufficiently reekon with man's power of imaginative reaction against experience. We must not overlook the possibility that these flashing glimpses of Eternity in man may be simply momentary revolt and reaction against his resistless tyranny of continual Time, flashes in which imagination flies off to the very extreme opposite of his experience; thus the unbreakable process of Time causes man to fashion imaginatively the perfect opposite of Time, Eternity.*

ETERNITY.

But how is man to imagine what he has not experienced? That is against all the received opinions of his nature.

TIME.

I do not profess, as some philosophers do, and as you, it seems, do also, to define the operations of man's imagination. But what is certain to me, though it is a thing often in these discussions ignored, is that if any experience is given to man, he is thereby given the power to imagine its opposite. It may be quite true that imagination cannot devise what experience has not, in some way or other, warranted; but experience does warrant imagination to devise

* Proinde licet quot vis vivendo condere saecla;
mors aeterna tamen nilo minus illa manebit,
nec minus ille diu iam non erit, ex hodierno
lumine qui finem vitai fecit, et ille.
mensibus atque annis qui multis occidit ante.

what has never happened to him at all, not only by sorting out and arranging afresh the facts of experience, but especially by stimulating imagination to invent the perfect polar opposite extreme of experience; give him a *plus*, and the *plus* will find itself automatically answered in him by its *minus*. You may say, indeed, that imagination can always completely *polarize* experience. To take the most general and obvious instance: man's experience is dimensional; and, for that very reason, in his imagination he causes to exist the possibility of non-dimensional being. Or again; man's experience of himself is, that he is an incomplete and dependent being. At once he has imagined a Being Complete and Independent. Knowing himself creature, he must suppose a Creator. And the stronger his experience of the first, the intenser his imagination of the other; so much so, that this particular polarization of experience has been seriously put forward by a reputable philosopher as a self-evident proof that God Exists. So God certainly does exist, in this way of reasoning; he exists because the mind of man exists. But that was not what this philosopher meant; he, like you, was for proving an absolute. You see, Eternity, the deep foundation of all man's experience is, the sense of imprisonment in immutable Law. Hence, man is tortured by an imaginative conception, that the Whole of things might have happened otherwise than it has done; it is his primary polarization of experience. Is this, says he, this

endless world of stars and life, the only possible mode of being? Do I not, for all my experience of it, seem yet a stranger within it? (The common feeling of *being a stranger in the world* is, of course, merely the result of instantaneous, perhaps even unconscious, imaginative reaction against the world.) And have I not, man goes on, the feeling that I have sometime watched the boundless procession of this worldly immensity *from the outside?*—So man has his flashing wonders at another mode of being. But as law, whose rigour and constriction cause these wondering revolts, is perhaps only man's illusion, only his own rhythmic response to formless externals,—is, at any rate, nothing provable beyond that it is the manner of his perceiving of circumstance,—may not also that which opposes his knowledge of worldly Law, those flashing glimpses which you, Eternity, say are sent into him from the height of your rare absoluteness,—may not these also be only man's illusion? And when you tell me that I am merely a distortion proceeding from your light, caused by your unlimited splendour shining narrowly through dimension, I can at least answer, that it is just as likely you may belong to man as much as I myself belong; moreover, that you may be merely a result in man of me. If I, Time, am man's unquestionable spiritual experience, or perhaps I should say, the unescapable condition of that experience, you, Eternity, are man's imaginative reaction against me and my unalterableness.

ETERNITY.

You cannot possibly mean that! You cannot possibly mean to suggest that I, Eternity, am anything but a perfect and absolute existence, an unqualified necessity, utterly independent of any perceptive, ratiocinative, or imaginative being whatever?

TIME.

Strange that no one but man has ever heard anything of you.

ETERNITY.

What does that matter to me? How can it affect me, whether anyone has ever heard of me or not? I am: simply, I exist. I am the one unfounded existence, uncontainable, interminable, unqualifiable. I am Eternity.

TIME.

In the eagerness of your vindication, you seem not to have noticed an occurrence which seems rather interesting. Look round you; you who are so determined to be immeasurable and unconfined, look around you.

ETERNITY.

What is this? What have you done to me? I seem to have some kind of a substance surrounding me! I am enclosed, I, Eternity! I, who have always lived in clear, unapproachable sublimity, perceive myself to be walled in by a grey mist! I feel as if I

had been trapt by place! You have done this, you rogue! And, by My Self, it is frightening!

TIME.

Yes, I expect I have done it. I am so strongly conscious of it myself that I have doubtless infected you, against your will, with the same consciousness.

ETERNITY.

Of what? Of what are you speaking?

TIME.

Of this mist.

ETERNITY.

Limit My Nature, if I can make this mist out! It is all round me, over me, under me; it is drawing up to me, falling down on me, closing round me! Tell me, you wickedness, what it is.

TIME.

This mist?—It is the Mind of Man.

ETERNITY.

You conjurer!

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